NDP STALLS YORK BACK-TO-WORK BILL, PG 3

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Celebrity Pg 25

Prince Harry now a single man

Tories to target training

Billions earmarked in tomorrow's budget for those who have lost their jobs

More than $2 billion in training and support funds for those who lose their jobs will be announced in tomorrow's federal budget, along with hundreds of millions of dollars to create a new economic development agency for hard-hit southern Ontario.

Human Resources Minister Diane Finley outlined the spending in an interview with the Toronto Star as Prime Minister Stephen Harper hinted the budget would contain permanent tax cuts to put money in the pockets of middle-class Canadians.

Canada 2009 Federal **Budget**

Finley said the budget would contain $1.5 billion in cash to provide training for laid-off workers who are eligible to collect employment insurance (EI) and for those who cannot access EI funds under current rules.

For instance, she said, this money would be available to help pay for training for someone who had been staying at home to raise children but now wanted to return to the workforce.

Another $500 million will be earmarked to help retrain laid-off workers who have long job experience but who are too young to think about retirement. The idea is to assist them to learn the skills needed to find another job in a changing employment market.

Finley admitted yesterday that a lot of Canadians are "unfortunately" going to lose their jobs before the economy bounces back.

The government will also pledge added financial support for apprentices studying skilled trades and for newcomers to Canada who need to have their credentials recognized so they can work here.

"This is so we can end the cliché of doctors driving taxi cabs when we desperately need doctors," Finley said.

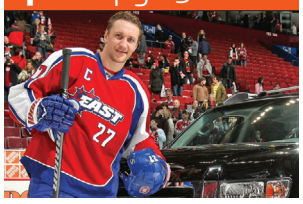
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 8

Spending and tax measures

- The government has announced it will run up a $64-billion budget deficit over the next two years to pay for a massive economic stimulus package including more spending and tax measures, including:
- Overall stimulus package valued at about $21 billion.
- $1-billion fund to help mining, farming and forestry industry communities.
- $2 billion for social housing.
- Some permanent tax cuts.
- $500 million to modernize farms and help provide better equipment.
- $50 million to expand slaughterhouses.
- $50 million to promote Canada's forestry sector abroad.
- $100 million for better forestry technology.

Sports pg 15



Kovalev lifts East all-stars

Entertainment

SAG hands out awards, page 22

Going Green pg 16

Building a green future

Workology pg 17

What to do with EI?

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GREG BAKER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fireworks explode over the skyline of Beijing earlier today as residents celebrate the arrival of the Chinese New Year. Millions of Chinese across the country celebrated the arrival of the Year of the Ox.

Trusting, but stubborn: Year of the Ox

Toronto owes the mighty ox a debt of gratitude.

"Yes, I think you can comfortably say a good part of clearing the land in the Toronto area, after settlement began in 1793, was done by oxen," says Carl Benn, chair of the history department at Ryerson University.

Moving forward a few hundred years, the ox, or castrated bull, is also the inspiration behind many mouth-watering Caribbean dishes offered across the GTA.

And just in case you need another reason to celebrate the mighty beast, today is the first day of the Year of the Ox on the Chinese calendar. People born under the sign of the ox tend to be trusting, open-minded but stubborn in their resolve.

Among other events around the city, Studio Gallery in the Distillery District is holding a printmaking exhibition dedicated to the Year of the Ox. The show runs until Feb. 11.

Contributing artist Natalie Drajewicz, 21, is looking forward to seeing how international artists tackle the image.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Doc hotline may be right medicine

HEALTH Help is on the way for 500,000 Ontario residents without a family physician, who have generally been forced to go to walk-in clinics or emergency rooms when they need medical attention. Starting next month, a new hotline will help match people with a doctor in their area willing to take on new patients, the Toronto Star has learned.

The government will institute a special 1-800 number, where a Telehealth Ontario staffer will take down a health history and pass it on to a nurse who will help find a family doctor.

"This is a made-in-Ontario solution," Health Minister David Caplan told the Star of the program to be launched in February. "We will be the first jurisdiction, I am aware of, that is doing this."

Still, critics point out the program, called Health Care Connect, will not deal with the core problem: A shortage of doctors.

Dr. Douglas Mark, who practises in Scarborough, also wants to know where the doctors will come from to care for 500,000 people.

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Family homeless after Malton blaze
A fire in Malton Saturday night has left a family homeless. The fire broke out at around 11:30 p.m. in the garage of a detached home on Monica Drive. No injuries were reported and the family is staying with friends. The blaze caused approximately $150,000 in damage. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Local

Owners offer meals for lost pup

Penny, a former stray dog who has survived two hurricanes in Louisiana, has been missing in Toronto for eight weeks. Her owners, Alana Cowl and Scott Simon, are offering a $1,000 reward for Penny's safe return or alternatively, Cowl, a trained chef, will cook a meal once a week for a year for whoever finds her. Penny is white with apricot-coloured splotches, some heart-shaped. She is microchipped with the number 982009105462418. She was seen last week in the High Park area. Cowl can be reached at 416-762-2686 or 416-453-3232. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Tomorrow's Metro

Health

We look at the new birth control pill Yaz, which promises a shorter hormone-withdrawal phase than other pills.

metronews.ca

WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Comment What could a $34-billion deficit buy at **metronews.ca/canada**

Read Read Guidy Mamann's column on immigration law at **metronews.ca/live**

Fashion Style columnist Kenya Hunt launches her new blog at **metronews.ca/canada**

Lotteries

Friday, Jan. 23: Lotto Super 7: 3, 4, 17, 22, 28, 34 & 37. Bonus 21; **Saturday, Jan. 24: Lotto 6/49:** 9, 13, 20, 29, 45 & 46. Bonus 5; **Sunday, Jan. 26: Ontario Pick 3:** 7 1 8; **Ontario Pick 4:** 6 9 2 5 **Encore:** 3199966; **Daily Keno:** 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 28, 34, 36, 37, 40, 43, 45, 54, 58 & 65. These results are not official.

Grits take on York crisis

McGuinty introduces back-to-work legislation to end strike

York University contract professor Dhruv Jain came to the legislature yesterday to watch the Ontario government introduce back-to-work legislation that will force him to return to the classroom.

Jain, 25, teaches one full course, the introduction of African studies, and makes $14,000 a year and lives under the poverty line.

"My parents throw in a little bit but they don't have a lot of money. Their store is not doing very well," he said after the provincial New Democratic Party refused to support back-to-work legislation introduced by the Ontario government yesterday in a rare Sunday sitting of the legislature.

Jain feels as though the "academic integrity" of York is shot because the administration failed to work with the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903, and come up with a settlement.

"You are basically forcing 3,300 people to go back into a classroom they do not want to be in, not because they don't want to teach their students but because of the way this labour conflict has been resolved," he said.

FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Premier Dalton McGuinty, left, talks with Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne, right, in the legislature yesterday prior to the introduction of back-to-work legislation to end the York strike.

NDP students feel backlash over block

- Student members of the NDP are finding classmates resentful that the party is stalling back-to-work legislation that would end an 11-week strike. Furthermore, the 450 New Democrats have themselves been divided throughout the strike, says Phil Pothen, in charge of policy for the York branch of the party.

Outside on the front lawn of Queen's Park, hundreds of protesters braved the cold weather yesterday, waving signs and loudly jeering as Premier Dalton McGuinty and MPPs inside listened to the introduction of Bill 145, an act to resolve labour disputes between York University and CUPE 3903.

But without unanimous all-party support, MPPs now must hold a debate. If the debate is finished tomorrow, students could be back at school on Thursday. If finished on Wednesday, Friday would be the start of classes, said a York University spokesperson.

NDP Leader Howard Hampton said his party refuses to be part of what he called a "manipulative process" led by McGuinty's government. "We will insist on a full debate," he said.

The strike shut down the York campus on Nov. 6, when 3,300 teaching assistants, contract faculty and graduate assistants walked off the job.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Schools look at expert, PR for enrolment

REPORT Toronto's public board is looking to boost enrolment — and funding — by hiring a recruitment expert, launching a public relations campaign and opening specialized schools to attract students from the GTA, says a report going before trustees this week.

The ambitious report, which sets out a "new fiscal direction" for the Toronto District School Board, recommends ways for it to increase revenues as well as better manage its money.

"Stemming the decline of student enrolment or increasing enrolment is the single greatest opportunity to maintain or increase revenues," says the report obtained by the Toronto Star, as the bulk of education funding is on a per-student basis. Last fall, the Toronto board lost about 4,000 students, a trend that is expected to continue.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

ARSONS Three fires yesterday appear to be the work of an arsonist suspected in 18 other blazes in the west end since last year. Police said the latest, all on side streets around the Jane and Annette streets area, show similar patterns to previous arsons in the area.

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Eight people injured in three-car crash
Eight people were taken to hospital after a three-car collision on Midland Avenue yesterday. None of the injuries were serious. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES**

TONY BOCK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Vier Guy, left, and her lawyer, Alan Preyra, walk in the alley near Greenwood and Danforth where she slipped and fell nine years ago. Guy was awarded more than $30,000 from the city after slipping on the ice and breaking her wrist, but the alley is still treacherous with ice.

Slippery slope for slip-and-fall suits

Vier Guy stopped dead in her tracks, the laneway extending before her like a snow- and ice-covered obstacle course. She had seen it in this perilous state before.

Nine years ago, she slipped and fell on this very same laneway, adjacent to the Greenwood subway exit on the Bloor-Danforth line. She fractured her wrist, bumped her head and sued the City of Toronto.

Last month, an Ontario Superior Court judge ruled the city was "grossly negligent." Justice Alfred J. Stong said the laneway should be treated as a sidewalk — with its snow and ice removed — because it is regularly used by local residents, subway passengers, students and people making deliveries to stores on Danforth Avenue.

Stong awarded Guy damages of $33,948.39.

The ruling, which the city is appealing, places Toronto's snow removal practices under scrutiny. It comes during the second consecutive monster winter — the 115 centimetres of snow so far are more than this time last year — with the avalanche of snow causing a spike in slip-and-fall injuries, according to downtown hospitals, insurance company officials, claims adjusters and lawyers on either side of liability claims.

Provincial law requires municipalities to maintain all sidewalks. They can pass bylaws like Toronto's requiring homeowners to clean snow from adjacent sidewalks. But courts have ruled that if someone slips and falls, municipalities are liable. (Homeowners could become responsible if they have blocked the sidewalk).

The 194 centimetres of snow last winter were roughly twice as much as what fell the winter before, causing liability claims to almost double, Toronto budget chief Shelley Carroll says. Generally, 40 per cent of claims are found to have no merit and don't proceed; the rest require the defence of city lawyers. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Annual costs

- Toronto spends $12 million a year cleaning and salting three-quarters of the city's 8,000 kilometres of sidewalks. It calculates that extending sidewalk snow removal to all neighbourhoods would cost another $7 million to $8 million a year. Extending it to Toronto's 250 kilometres of laneways, such as the one that tripped up Guy, would cost at least another $21 million.

Cop hit with shotgun pellet, 2 charged

Two men are facing a total of 26 charges, including three counts of attempted murder, after a police officer was struck in the head with shotgun pellet Saturday night.

Police initially responded to a Beer Store robbery around 8 p.m. near Symington Avenue and Dupont Street. While fleeing, one of the suspects fired a shotgun, skinning the officer's forehead.

"He's pretty lucky, that's for sure," said Staff. Sgt. Devin Kealey.

A shotgun was recovered near the scene, he said.

One man was arrested when he was found hiding in a backyard on Campbell Avenue, while police scoured the area with a helicopter looking for the other man. He was nabbed just after 11 p.m.

> **"He's pretty lucky, that's for sure."**
> Staff Sgt. Devin Kealey

Jeron Powell, 32, faces 17 charges including attempted murder, armed robbery and possession of an unauthorized firearm. He will remain in jail until his Feb. 11 court date.

Craig Buckle, 29, is charged with armed robbery, possession of a loaded weapon and several other offences. He is remanded in custody until Jan. 28. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

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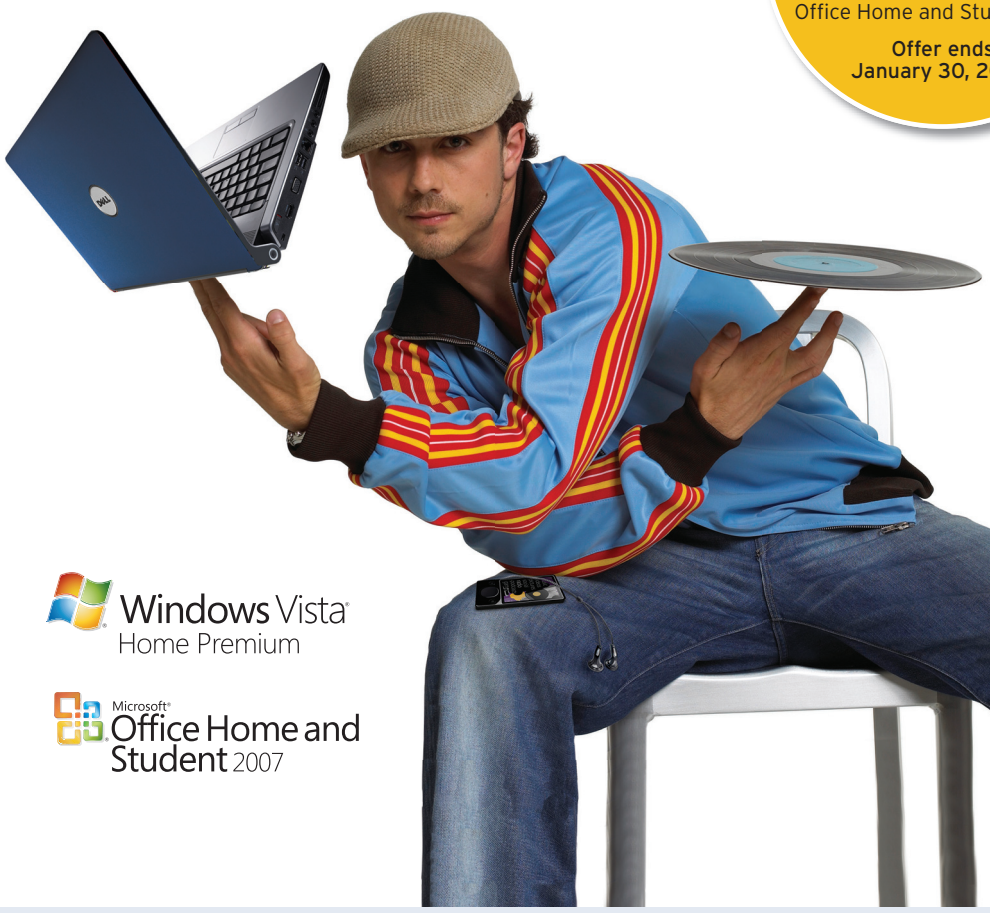

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West-end blazes cause $110,000 in damage

A woman was taken to hospital for smoke inhalation following a fire in the city's west end early yesterday. The fire started at around 6 a.m. in a house on Rockcliffe Boulevard. The fire is not connected to the spate of arsons that also took place yesterday morning. Officials said $110,000 in damage was done. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Mississauga man ID'd as body found last May

MICHIGAN A body that washed ashore in Michigan last May has finally been identified as that of a missing Toronto-area man.

Thirty-six-year-old Steven Ralph Hudson went missing in January 2008.

His unidentified body washed ashore near the Fermi 2 nuclear plant on Lake Erie some 50 kilometres south of Detroit on May 6.

A Michigan State Police facial reconstruction artist was called in to assist on the case after fingerprints and DNA failed to identify the man.

Trooper Sarah Krebs, who did the reconstruction, was completing her work when she saw Hudson's photo on a missing person website.

Police officers in Ontario are currently investigating Hudson's disappearance.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Reflecting DiverseCity

Initiative aims for firms to mirror Toronto's population

When bank presidents, lawyers and politicians sit down for lunch today at the Fairmont Royal York hotel, it won't be the typical Canadian Club crowd.

That's because the sea of 600 faces attending will represent the ethnic makeup of Toronto, as business and community leaders throw their support behind DiverseCity — an initiative to ensure boardrooms actually reflect the region's population, of which nearly 40 per cent are members of visible minorities.

"The tickets are just flying out the door," said Noella Milne, a commercial real estate lawyer and past president of the Canadian Club. "There is such a buzz around this."

More than 100 companies, non-profit groups and community organizations are signing on to DiverseCity, a joint effort between the Toronto City Summit Alliance and the Maytree Foundation. Its goal is to have 500 people from underrepresented ethnic and racial minorities appointed to agencies, boards and commissions by 2010.

Milne, an Indian woman who came to Canada at 17, believes in this initiative.

VINCE TALOTTA/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Noella Milne is a commercial real estate lawyer at Borden Ladner Gervais, but as an immigrant from India, she believes strongly in serving as a role model for young immigrants.

Executives helping executives

- The DiverseCity initiative also plans a speaker series to link senior executives with up-and-coming executives, a fellowship for 25 next-generation leaders
- It also plans to prepare 90 individuals from diverse backgrounds to run for political office or run campaigns.

"I really feel that it's important, as an immigrant, to make some changes," said Milne.

"It is still very white, still very male — no matter what people say."

The Bay Street lawyer sits on six boards, from the Canadian Club to George Brown College, quietly trying to promote change.

Milne was recently named to the governing board of the Ontario Science Centre where one of her main priorities is to ensure children who ordinarily could not afford the admission fee can visit and perhaps be inspired.

David Pecaut, chair of the Toronto City Summit Alliance, says by tapping into diversity from boardrooms to political office, creative thinking emerges.

"You get away from group-think — from people all coming to the table with the same ideas, the same vision, having gone to the same places in their lives," he said. "You get a richer outcome."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Africentric studies set to start this week

CURRICULUM Canada's largest school board has created the first Africentric curriculum to be used at schools across the city and trained more than 100 teachers to start using it this spring, some as early as this week.

The social studies lessons from kindergarten through Grade 8 are part of a bid by the Toronto District School Board to wrestle a 40 per cent dropout rate among black students down to 15 per cent in five years — and are designed for use at all schools, not just the Africentric school proposed for the fall.

Classes

- Ten classes at Firgrove Public School in the heart of the Jane-Finch neighbourhood are expected to start using the lessons as early as today.

"I want this to be in every single school, to be part of the curriculum for all of our students," said Gerry Connelly, education director at the Toronto District School Board, at a recent all-day training session for about 120 teachers and principals.

Lessons in topics from the storytelling of Ghana to black pioneer towns in Ontario were presented to educators, many of them black Canadians, who came to learn how to stretch the curriculum beyond its traditional focus on Europe.

"When this many young people are disengaged and don't feel the curriculum has anything to do with them, the question of urgency becomes critical," said Ryerson University Prof. Grace-Edward Galabuzi, part of an advisory committee that helped design the units of study.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

3 delivery men robbed Saturday

MUGGINGS It was a bad night for delivery men Saturday as three were victims of robberies in separate incidents around Toronto. First, a Kentucky Fried Chicken employee had a gun pointed at his head as someone demanded money from him; a Pizza Pizza employee was robbed by a man armed with a shotgun; lastly, a Sushi Delight employee was punched in the stomach by two suspects, who grabbed the food and fled.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Lottery winners from Ontario

There are three winning tickets for the $44-million jackpot prize in Saturday night's Lotto 6-49 draw. It's the fourth-largest lottery jackpot in Canadian history. All three winning tickets were bought in Ontario and each is worth $14.8 million. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Manitobans the worst recyclers

Manitobans are bucking the green trend by throwing away more garbage than ever before — topping the scales at more than one million tonnes of trash a year — and thereby earning the dubious distinction of being the worst recyclers in the country. At a time when the rest of Canada is diverting almost one-quarter of its garbage away from landfills, Manitoba has gone in the other direction.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Harper blasted for policy changes

From the Senate to fixed-date elections and government appointments, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has seen his political principles tested and turned on their head in recent months.

Tomorrow, Harper will put a price tag on that political journey — as much as $34 billion — as the minority Conservatives unveil a budget that will spill red ink on a scale not seen in more than a decade.

This from a prime minister who just months ago vowed there would be no deficit.

Canada 2009 Federal **Budget**

"We will not be running a deficit. We will keep our spending within our means. It is that simple. The alternative is not a plan. It is just the consequence of complete panic, and this government will not panic at a time of uncertainty," Harper told a Toronto audience on Oct. 7.

Times change quickly and, with them, the politicians who rule.

The story of Harper these past few months — as he grapples with a minority Parliament and a fast-changing economic downturn — has been one of political principles meeting reality and, in the minds of some, principles sacrificed for political expediency.

"He's turned his back on so many things. He said he would never appoint senators the way he did. Sure enough he broke that promise. Election dates, appointing Supreme Court justices, the list is pretty long," NDP Leader Jack Layton told CTV's Question Period.

In the case of the deficit, Harper has a good excuse for breaking his word — an "extraordinary" economic crisis, a Conservative strategist said.

There are some who don't buy Harper's conversion to pragmatism, but instead accuse him of losing his way and being willing to sacrifice his principles to stay in power.

"Absolutely he has abandoned his principles ... I don't even recognize this person who is the prime minister of Canada," said Gerry Nicholls, who worked with Harper at the National Citizens Coalition.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Groups call for a green budget

ENVIRONMENT Calls for Finance Minister Jim Flaherty to keep the environment top of mind when crafting the stimulus plan, the highlight of tomorrow's federal budget, have been loud and persistent.

Economists, opposition parties and activists are all urging billions of dollars to retune the Canadian economy for a low-carbon future. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

'Moral values' key to budget: Church group

EQUALITY In an open letter to Canada's first ministers, a coalition of Canadian churches and religious groups is warning that an economic stimulus without attention to "moral values" is doomed to failure.

The letter sets out four moral principles the group says should guide all politicians as they address the current economic crisis: Sustainability, sufficiency, equity and solidarity with all other living creatures.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Nova Scotia **Ice surfing**

ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ice surfers take advantage of brisk winds and excellent ice conditions yesterday as they take to Lake William in Waverley, N.S.

Prime minister gets a second shot at budget

Canada 2009 Federal **Budget**

SPENDING Prime Minister Stephen Harper gets a political do-over this week as he tries to save Canada's economy and his own minority government.

He hopes to do it with tomorrow's free-spending budget, which will dispense billions of dollars for social housing, infrastructure and hard-hit sectors such as mining and forestry.

But Harper returns to Parliament today with his reputation as a political tactician wounded, facing an emboldened opposition and a new Liberal leader — Michael Ignatieff — who in just a few weeks has already buoyed his party with confidence and rising poll numbers.

Despite the big-ticket initiatives coming tomorrow, NDP Leader Jack Layton isn't backing off from his bid to have the NDP-Liberal coalition take power.

"What we need is real change … what we won't get if Mr. Harper stays in power," he told CTV's Question Period yesterday.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Canada 2009 Federal **Budget**

Upcoming Coverage

Tuesday

- **What provinces are asking for**
- **Lawrence Martin on what to expect**
- **Charles Davies on securities regulators**

Wednesday

- **The breakdown on who gets what**
- **Reaction from the Opposition coalition**
- **Profiles on locally affected families**

Safety Message From Toronto Hydro

Toronto Hydro-Electric System Limited deeply regrets two recent incidents in which two dogs died after stepping on a stray electrical current on sidewalks in the area of Annette Street and Keele Street.

Since these incidents occurred, our crews have been inspecting equipment in neighbourhoods across the City for other potential locations of stray voltage. If a problem is found, the site is immediately de-energized and repaired. These inspections will continue until all streets in Toronto have been covered.

Mobile voltage trackers are being used for the initial city-wide inspection. Visual inspections are also being carried out. Any Toronto Hydro equipment such as hand wells on sidewalks will be replaced with new equipment that is less likely to conduct stray voltage.

We plan to repeat these inspections on an ongoing basis.

Toronto Hydro urges anyone who is concerned about stray voltage in their neighbourhood to stay clear of the area and to call our **dedicated hotline at 416-222-3773** immediately. A Toronto Hydro inspection crew will be dispatched to check the location and fix any stray voltage problems that may be present.

For more information, please visit **www.torontohydro.com/voltageinspection**

The figure and star is a trademark of Toronto Hydro Corporation used under licence.

toronto hydro electric system

CIDA staff spent big for first-class flights
The head of the CIDA and two senior staff spent $40,000 on first-class airfare to attend a conference on aid in Africa. THE CANADIAN PRESS

60,000 turkeys face cull over bird flu

JEFF HODSON
Metro Canada

The cull of about 60,000 turkeys will begin today or tomorrow following an outbreak of bird flu at a farm in British Columbia.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed Saturday the presence of H5 avian influenza at E&H Farms in Abbotsford.

"Tests to date indicate that the strain of (avian influenza) in this case is low pathogenic," the CFIA said in a release.

"Further testing is underway to confirm pathogenicity and to determine the precise subtype and strain of the virus."

Avian influenza viruses rarely affect humans and if poultry is properly handled and cooked does not pose a risk to food safety.

In addition to the cull, the CFIA has placed restrictions on the movement of poultry on 23 farms that are within three kilometres of the infected property. They are also investigating the recent movement of birds and equipment from the farm.

Poultry owners in the area have been asked to employ biosecurity measures and monitor their flocks, immediately reporting any sick or dead birds.

Outbreaks

- Fraser Valley, B.C., experienced an H5N2 outbreak in November 2005.
- There are multiple subtypes of H5 avian flu. Even within H5N1 viruses there are different families. The one that wreaked havoc in Asia and Africa has not been found in North America.
- In 2004, 17 million birds died or were destroyed in an outbreak by an H7N3 virus in the Fraser Valley.
- Avian influenza rarely affects humans unless they have had close contact with infected birds.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

First Nation vote on settlement

REFERENDUM Members of the Peguis First Nation, 220 kilometres north of Winnipeg, have cast their ballots in a referendum on whether to accept a $127-million settlement with the government of Canada for a century-old land claims dispute.

Under the proposed settlement, every member of the band would receive $1,000, while the First Nation would receive $118 million in tightly controlled community trusts for education, business loans and community infrastructure projects.

Four thousand voters were eligible to cast ballots. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Experts say jailing pointless for man, 93, guilty of incest

He is deaf, nearly blind and barely mobile, but 93-year-old Philippe Hamelin could still conceivably find himself behind bars come tomorrow. A Quebec judge is to decide whether the elderly man should be imprisoned after being convicted of incest dating back nearly half a century.

The Crown is seeking a prison sentence of between seven and nine years while Hamelin's lawyer has asked for two years less a day in the community and added that any prison time would be like a death sentence.

Experts agree that locking up Hamelin would be pointless, given he has no previous record and given assurances from his lawyer he poses no risk to society or to reoffend.

Hamelin, who suffers from a degenerative disorder similar to Alzheimer's disease, was convicted last year of incest, sexual molestation and assault causing bodily harm against his daughters between 1956 and 1963.

His daughters Marcelle and Michele, now in their 60s, were just children. The sisters had the publication ban on their identities lifted at their own request last year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Afghan president says U.S. forces killed 16 civilians

Afghan President Hamid Karzai condemned a U.S. operation he says killed 16 Afghan civilians as hundreds of villagers denounced the American military during an angry demonstration. U.S. officials said the raid early Saturday killed 15 armed militants. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Silent march for victims

Thousands of people marched silently through the northwest Belgian town of Dendermonde yesterday to honour the victims of Friday's bloody rampage at a local daycare where a knife-wielding man killed two babies and a caregiver. Dendermonde Mayor Piet Buyse said the Fairytale-land nursery would never reopen.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stimulus the focus

Obama woos lawmakers

U.S. President Barack Obama, fresh off a few days boldly reversing some of the Bush era's most contentious policies, will spend the week ahead trying to convince Capitol Hill lawmakers to swiftly pass his $820-billion US economic stimulus package.

"If we do not act boldly and swiftly, a bad situation could become dramatically worse," Obama said in a weekend address, his first as president.

"If we do not act boldly and swiftly, a bad situation could become dramatically worse."
Barack Obama

Winning broad support for the package, however, could prove daunting. In the weeks ahead, Obama has to win over Republicans and some fiscally conservative Democrats who don't like the economic recovery package.

House Republicans say they won't support it because it's too reliant on government spending and doesn't provide enough tax relief for families and small businesses.

They also charge the plan contains too much "pork-barrel" spending — cash infusions earmarked for some curious causes.

Even Obama's presidential campaign rival John McCain, a moderate Republican who's been acting as an adviser to Obama on some key cabinet appointments, said yesterday he can't support the recovery plan without even further alterations.

"We're losing sight of what the stimulus is all about, and that is job creation," said McCain.

Democratic House leaders say the package will pass by mid-February. Obama hopes to have it on his desk to sign into law on Feb. 16, President's Day.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iraq **First election in three years**

HADI MIZBAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A woman holds a small Iraqi flag yesterday during a rally for candidates in the upcoming provincial council elections in Baghdad, Iraq. Iraqis go to the polls Saturday to choose ruling councils in 14 of the country's 18 provinces. It will be the first nationwide balloting in three years.

Berlusconi in hot water over words

ITALY Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi is being criticized for suggesting Italy's women are so beautiful they need military escorts to avoid being raped. He was responding to queries about a plan to deploy 300,000 soldiers to fight crime. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iran tests air-to-air missile

ARMS Iran's state television said yesterday the country has successfully test-fired a heat-seeking air-to-air missile. The report said the missile has a range of 100 kilometres.

Iran periodically announces missile tests to demonstrate the self-sufficiency of its defence industries. Iran launched an arms development program during its 1980-88 war with Iraq to compensate for a U.S. weapons embargo.

Since 1992, Iran has produced its own tanks, armoured personnel carriers, missiles and a fighter plane. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Abu Ghraib prison gets a facelift

IRAQ Abu Ghraib prison is being reopened next month, but first the notorious lockup is being given a facelift and a new name.

Iraq's deputy justice minister, Busho Ibrahim, says the renovated facility will be called Baghdad's Central Prison because the name Abu Ghraib has left a "bitter feeling inside Iraqis' hearts."

Abu Ghraib, a name synonymous with prisoner abuse under Saddam Hussein and later the Americans who overthrew him, has been closed since 2006.

Ibrahim says the prison will house 3,500 inmates when it reopens in mid-February and will have a capacity for about 15,000 by the end of this year.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Ibrahim insisted the facility will be operated according to international standards.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Museum

- The Iraq government said last year it would turn a section of the Abu Ghraib prison into a museum documenting Saddam's crimes but not the abuses by U.S. guards.

JANUARY CLEARANCE

Now's a great time to rid your household of all the stuff you see here: leftover paint and solvents, empty oil containers and used oil filters, antifreeze, propane tanks, fertilizers and pesticides, and single use batteries. You know none of these belongs in the garbage or your Blue Box. So what can you do? Introducing a new program called 'Do What You Can', which lets you drop your familiar household hazardous or special waste products at convenient collection depots, knowing they'll be reused, recycled or disposed of responsibly. Do your bit to help keep our communities livable. Learn more at **dowhatyoucan.ca**

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Stewardship Ontario's ***Do What You Can*** program is funded by the industries that make and distribute these familiar household products, and in cooperation with municipal and commercial partners, works to reduce waste through the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle).

DO WHAT YOU CAN

10 killed in Turkish avalanche
An avalanche has killed at least 10 people as they hiked on a mountain in northeastern Turkey. The hikers were part of a group of between 15 and 20 people out yesterday on the 2,200-metre Mount Zigana. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vietnam ferry sinks

40 killed as overloaded boat takes on water

A small ferry overloaded with holiday shoppers sank in central Vietnam yesterday, killing at least 40 people ahead of the traditional Lunar New Year. Most of the dead were women and children.

At least 36 passengers survived, a few by swimming to shore and others plucked by rescuers from the Gianh river in Quang Binh province, local police chief Phan Thanh Ha said.

Rivers

• Vietnam is criss-crossed by rivers and streams, but many of them have no bridges, forcing villagers to rely on small boats to ferry them across. Dozens drown each year in boat accidents.

The boat's owner and captain were detained for questioning, Ha said.

An initial investigation showed the wooden boat was overloaded with nearly 80 people, though it was designed to carry only 12.

Searchers recovered 40 bodies, including 27 women — three of whom were pregnant — and seven children, he said.

The boat was only 20 metres from the river bank when it began to take on water, apparently from the weight of too many passengers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

FLUSHED Allison Berry's Mr. Rooter bill came to $5,200 and the city's bill was $1,000 when her $70,000 diamond engagement ring slipped from her hand just as she was flushing the toilet in the restroom of a diner in Phoenix. It took a tiny video camera and 90 minutes of jackhammering and pipe removal to retrieve the ring.

DONOR Juanita Smallwood Osborne, who became one of the first living organ donors when she gave a kidney to her ailing son in the mid-1960s, has died at age 88. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Engine shows plane hit soft body before crash landing

PLANE A visual inspection of the battered, dented left engine of the US Airways jetliner that crash landed in the Hudson River shows no evidence of organic matter. But federal investigators say there are signs the plane hit a soft body.

The engine was pulled from the bottom of the Hudson Friday.

This engine and the right engine, which remained attached to the plane, will be shipped to their manufacturer for thorough examination.

All 155 people aboard survived when veteran pilot Chesley (Sully) Sullenberger splashed the crippled plane in the river Jan. 15. Sullenberger received a hero's welcome complete with marching band as thousands of people turned out Saturday when he returned to his home in the San Francisco suburb of Danville, Calif. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Read more Metro online today. metronews.ca

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Comment & Views

Comment

First day commandments

HineSight

Anne Hines

Besides working as a writer, I've spent the last eight years studying to become a United Church minister. I go to school part-time. I've said that my goal is "to try to graduate while there is still religion."

Frankly, some days, this seems a little touch and go.

Lately, the number of members in my church has been dropping faster than a Nortel-based RRSP. In fact, friends have suggested I consider a career with a brighter future. Perhaps as a typewriter salesperson or a small screen TV repairman.

But I've always been someone who follows her heart. Even when everyone's insisting its GPS must be on the blink.

As part of my studies, I'll spend the next eight months working at an inner city church and a mental health institution.

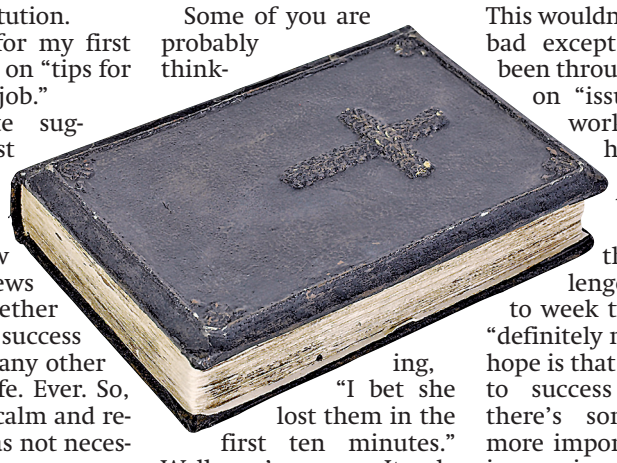
To prepare for my first day I boned up on "tips for starting a new job."

One website suggested, "First impressions are all-important. They determine how everyone views you and whether you'll achieve success in your job or any other part of your life. Ever. So, be sure to be calm and relaxed." This was not necessarily helpful.

Nor was, "try to show you fit in." In the past, my efforts to fit in have led me to join an office lawn bowling team, drink tree bark flavoured coffee and agree that Tiffany is the most underrated artist of our time.

The first day strategy I adopted was "setting the bar low." At the church, I was issued keys and cautioned never to misplace them.

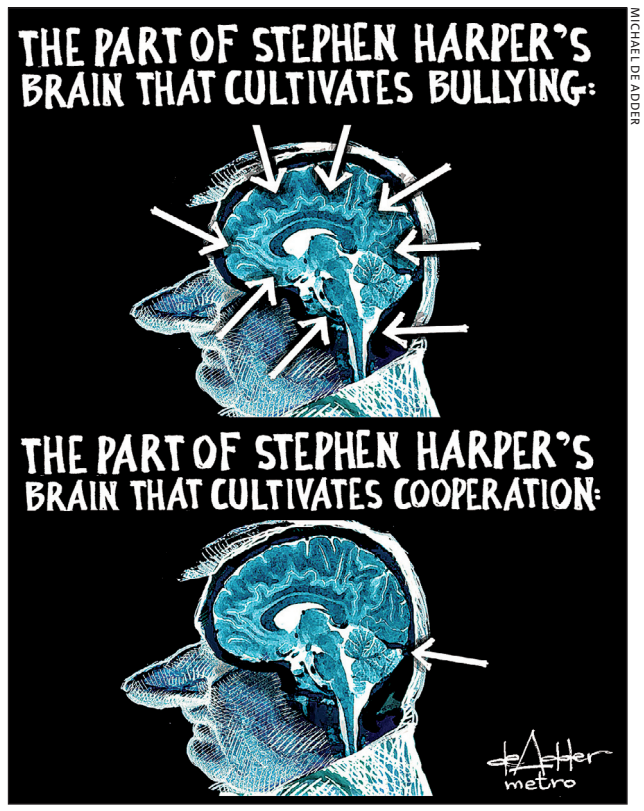
Some of you are probably thinking, "I bet she lost them in the first ten minutes." Well, you're wrong. It only took five. For the next half hour the entire staff searched for the keys that, fortunately, we found. Unfortunately where we found them was in my jeans pocket.



Things didn't go smoothly at the mental health institute either. Part way through the orientation questionnaire the administrator realized I was there as staff, not as a patient. This wouldn't have been so bad except we'd already been through the sections on "issues I'd like to work on while here" and "preferred medications."

Am I up to this new challenge? As I head into week two, I'm saying "definitely maybe." What I hope is that when it comes to success on the job there's something even more important than first impressions. Second, third and fourth ones.

Anne Hines is an author and humour writer. She has written three novels and one collection of nonfiction humour.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

GTA airport train cannot be another 407

InTransit

Ed Drass

transit@eddrass.com

An express rail link to Pearson airport is a fine idea, as long as the scheme doesn't make second-class travelers out of anyone whose trip starts somewhere other than Union Station. Until now, it looked as if residents in Brampton or northwest Toronto would not be able to access the airport via the busy Georgetown rail corridor that runs next to Pearson.

At last, plans are moving ahead to bring high-frequency service to this and adjoining GO rail lines, including a private-sector train between Union and the airport.

The stalled project has been handed over to the provincial planning agency Metrolinx and there is now the opportunity for some responsible planning to happen, hopefully in a much more transparent fashion. Many have blamed residents of the Weston area for airing their concerns that the premium-fare airport service would mean the closure of local streets, excessive diesel fumes and most galling — the train wouldn't even stop in Weston.

The fact is the previous plan was seriously flawed, not only due to the secrecy surrounding the use of public funds, but the manner in which other users along this major corridor would be denied access to Pearson. It's time to cross fingers that the province can close a deal through its Infrastructure Ontario department that won't turn the Pearson air rail link into another Highway 407.

When the former Conservative government sold the toll road to a for-profit conglomerate, many Ontarians thought Queen's Park would protect taxpayers and drivers better. Not so.

Since Liberal premier Dalton McGuinty insists on completing the airport line with a high degree of private sector involvement, we can at least ask that the secrecy of the transaction be only the minimum required.

The airport rail link is bundled with significant and overdue public investment. It may be tempting to hide subsidies to private concerns within this near-billion dollar mega-project, but Queen's Park and Metrolinx must follow the best practices used elsewhere in the world.

The public deserves clear answers about this multi-corridor scheme and they should get them at six upcoming public meetings in early February. Comment online at metrolinx.com.

Toronto-based transport writer Ed Drass covers transit issues every Monday.

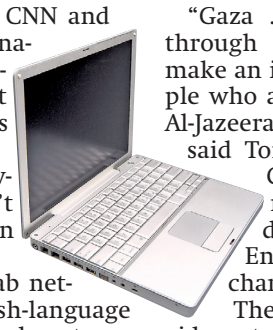
Quick Tip

• The chances of being a victim or witness to a serious crime on transit is thankfully low, but the shooting in Osgoode station shows it can happen. Have you considered how you would react to a rare occurrence like theft or assault? Be familiar with your safety options now, to prevent responses like panic or freezing.

Worth mentioning

Al-Jazeera sees spike during Gaza coverage

North American viewership of Al-Jazeera English rose dramatically during the Israel-Hamas war, partly because the channel had what CNN and other international networks didn't have: reporters inside Gaza.



But the viewers weren't watching it on television, where the Arab network's English-language station has almost no North American presence. Instead, the station streamed video of Israel's offensive on the Internet and took advantage of emerging online media such as the microblogging website Twitter to provide real-time updates.

"Gaza ... was a breakthrough opportunity to make an impact with people who are less aware of Al-Jazeera than we'd like," said Tony Burman, the Canadian who is now managing director of the English-language channel in Qatar.

The station's web video stream saw a 600 per cent jump — 60 per cent of which came from North America.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quote of the Day

"On Tuesday, we'll all see whether the Prime Minister has learned to listen. If he hasn't learned to listen, he's not going to lead for long."

— Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: torontoletters@metronews.ca
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Third U.S. bank fails this year
U.S. regulators shut down 1st Centennial Bank in California on Friday, the third U.S. bank to fail this year. Twenty-five U.S. banks succumbed last year, far more than those that failed in the previous five years combined. Only three failed in 2007. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

Internet users hit billion mark

The Internet now has reached a landmark one billion users worldwide, says digital tracking firm comScore. Chinese users accounted for almost 18 per cent, or about 180 million users, of the worldwide Internet audience followed by the United States with 16.2 per cent or about 163 million users. Canada was 11th with a 2.2 per cent share with about 22 million users. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

New pension plan proposed

Ontario studying private fund to supplement CPP payouts

A pension scheme is taking shape in Western Canada that may become a new option for people who don't have a company pension or for businesses that are fed up with running their own plans.

British Columbia has already endorsed the creation of a new pension fund, which Alberta is expected to join. Ontario and Nova Scotia are also studying similar proposals.

This concept pre-dates the current economic crisis that has badly bruised many pension funds. But the timing may end up being just right for Canadians whose pension savings have taken a pounding.

Experts are already cautioning that pension shortfalls and major losses to individual retirement savings plan accounts threaten to put off retirement for many people.

"With occupational pension plans, frankly they're a mess," says Keith Ambachtsheer, who leads a pension think-tank at the University of Toronto.

> **"With occupational pension plans, frankly they're a mess."**
> Keith Ambachtsheer

He estimates that five million Canadians are without a private pension fund to supplement whatever they get from the Canada Pension Plan when they retire.

The new pension fund will not be designed to compete with or replace the Canada Pension Plan. It's also not for everyone. Workers who are already paying into a company pension would likely not have any leeway under existing federal tax laws to join another plan.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Survival, not profits, focus of auto dealers convention

AUTOMOTIVE At this year's National Automobile Dealers Association convention in New Orleans, survival has passed maximizing profits as the focus of the annual event.

Thousands of dealers from across the U.S. were greeted by workshops titled Selling up in a down economy and Tough times, tougher dealers.

By almost all accounts, 2009 will be among the toughest years ever faced by the roughly 20,000 new car dealerships in the U.S., with sales of cars and lightweight trucks projected to shrink by as much as six million vehicles from the 16.1 million sold as recently as 2007. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAW touts labour cost edge

As negotiations for concessions start at reeling General Motors and Chrysler, the Canadian Auto Workers says workers at assembly plants in Canada hold a labour cost edge over their union and non-union counterparts in the United States.

The CAW says better productivity here gives Canadian workers a strong overall advantage.

Study

- TD Economics predicted a 28 per cent plunge in North American auto production this year. TD expects a modest recovery in sales in 2010.

The CAW says its members earn an average of $67 an hour in wages and benefits. That translates into about $53 US an hour because of a falling Canadian currency. Hourly wages and benefits at unionized assembly plants in the U.S. are about $60, while labour costs are $49 at non-unionized plants in the U.S.

CAW economist Jim Stanford said higher productivity here translates to the equivalent of a $5-an-hour edge over unionized assembly operations in the U.S. and $16 at non-union plants south of the border.

The CAW's position contrasts sharply with the view of some industry watchers that labour costs at GM and Chrysler here are $15 to $25 an hour higher than non-unionized foreign-based producers in the U.S.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

In brief

CHEESE RECALL The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is warning the public not to consume certain Black Diamond brand fat-free mozzarella processed cheese slices. The agency says the slices may contain small pieces of plastic mesh material and may pose a choking hazard. The affected product was sold in 500-gram, 24-slice packages bearing a best before date of Aug. 09, 2009, REG1411 and the UPC code 0 68200 88837 8.

AIRLINE JOBS The union that represents Air Canada's 5,700 flight attendants is accusing the airline of engaging in bullying tactics with just five months to go before its contract expires at the end of June. Faced with declining demand for travel, the airline says it will cut another 345 jobs, mostly among its 5,700 flight attendants, beginning March 2. As part of the downsizing, the airline says it will have one less flight attendant in business-class cabins on transatlantic flights. The airline eliminated 2,000 jobs in June.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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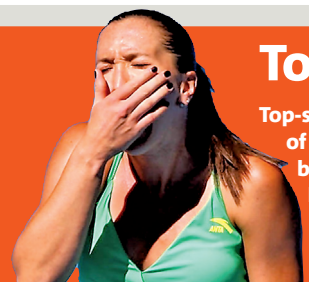
Canadian sixth at slalom

Julien Lizeroux edged Jean-Baptiste Grange in a French 1-2 finish yesterday at a men's World Cup slalom. John Kucera of Calgary had two strong slalom runs to vault to sixth place in the combined event. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports



Top seed Jankovic out

Top-seeded Jelena Jankovic of Serbia, left, was knocked out of the Australian Open yesterday, beaten in straight sets by Marion Bartoli of France. On the men's side, Roger Federer survived a scare, coming back from two sets down against Tomas Berdych to reach the quarter-finals. METRO NEWS SERVICES

JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Sports in brief

MLB Former Yankees manager Joe Torre takes some harsh swings at Alex Rodriguez, Brian Cashman and the New York Yankees in a book due out early next month, according to New York newspaper reports. The Yankee Years reveals that Rodriguez was called "A-Fraud" by his teammates and the star slugger developed an obsession with shortstop Derek Jeter, the New York Post and the Daily News reported yesterday.

NBA Milwaukee Bucks star guard Michael Redd will miss the rest of the season with two torn ligaments in his left knee. Redd was injured in the third quarter of Milwaukee's victory over Sacramento on Saturday night. Bucks general manager John Hammond said yesterday that an MRI exam on Redd's knee revealed a torn ACL and MCL.

Beckham

SOCCER David Beckham scored his first goal in Italy yesterday in AC Milan's 4-1 win over Bologna, and Kaka added two more to keep the team in touch with Juventus and Inter Milan. Beckham scored his first goal since joining Milan on loan in the 60th minute after being put into space by Alexandre Pato.

SOCCER A goal by captain Steven Gerrard earned Liverpool a 1-1 draw with city rival Everton while Arsenal was also taken to a replay after finishing 0-0 with Cardiff in the fourth round of the FA Cup yesterday. Manchester United, Middlesbrough and West Ham reached the fifth round on Saturday. Portsmouth's reign as FA Cup holders was ended by Swansea.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Raptors back on the winning track

NBA RESULT

Kings 97 **Raptors** 113

Chris Bosh had 31 points and eight rebounds, and Andrea Bargnani poured in 13 of his 24 points in the third quarter as the Toronto Raptors routed the Sacramento Kings 113-97 last night.

The two starting big men had their way with a foul-ridden Kings frontcourt as the Raptors (18-28) won their second straight following a seven-game losing skid. The mini hot streak couldn't have come at a better time for Toronto, with consecutive games against powerhouses Orlando, Cleveland, the L.A. Lakers and New Orleans looming in early February.

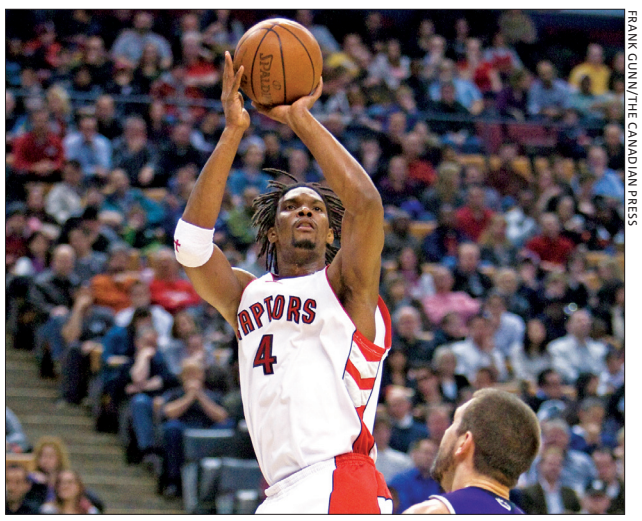
Jose Calderon had 16 points and eight assists in his second game back from a hamstring injury, while Anthony Parker and Jermaine O'Neal added 11 points apiece. O'Neal also had a game-high 10 rebounds.

While Bosh led the way with 17 points in the first half, it was Bargnani's big third quarter that helped the Raptors turn a modest three-point halftime lead into a 13-point advantage after three.

He hit a three-pointer early in the quarter and followed with a nifty layup on a pick-and-roll to make it 72-62. He added six free throws in the quarter, and is now averaging 21.2 points in 15 games since returning to the starting lineup. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Inching closer

- Jose Calderon went 3-for-3 from the line and has now made 86 straight foul shots dating to last season. He is now 11 behind the NBA record of 97 straight.



FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Chris Bosh shoots over Sacramento's Brad Miler last night. Bosh finished with 31 points in a 113-97 victory.

Two girls, one common dream, a world apart

MARTY YORK
marty.york@metronews.ca

They live in different worlds, speak different languages and play different sports.

Yet it's uncanny that Japan's Eri Yoshida and Canada's Brigette Lacquette have so much in common.

Both are 16, both are dominating male opponents and both are attracting excessive attention because of their abilities and potential.

Yoshida is blowing away batters with a remarkable sidearm knuckleball that recently landed her a professional contract in an all-male Japanese baseball league. She's being viewed in Japan as a pioneer and a symbol of the changing status of women in her country.

Lacquette is astonishing scouts by thoroughly outplaying male opponents in the Western Manitoba AA Midget Hockey League. She is her league's top talent. She was the youngest player at the recent world under-18 women's hockey championship in Germany and was chosen best defenceman.

Bridgette Lacquette was named top blue-liner at the world under-18 women's hockey championship.

"Several scouts have told me that, if Brigette continues in the direction she's going, she'll be the greatest female hockey player in Canadian history," said Scott Taylor, sports editor of Grass Roots News, Manitoba's aboriginal newspaper. "She's one of the few players I've seen who can do everything all game with her head up. She's so fast that she flies by opponents. And she's a great playmaker."

Brigette lives in Mallard, Man. "We're nowhere," said her father, Terrence, a Metis who has lived in Mallard his entire life. "Our community has about 80 adults, 40 kids, 20 dogs and 15 cats."

Still, dozens of U.S. universities — including Cornell, Providence, Minnesota and North Dakota — have found her and are bombarding her with expressions of interest.

Brigette, though, is only 5-foot-5 and so, barring a serious growth spurt, don't expect her to break the NHL's sex barrier.

Yoshida, though, has a serious chance to advance to MLB. She's only 5-foot but knuckleballers don't need size or strength. They need only to fool batters. Yoshida recently left a line of nine veteran male batters hitless and baseball types think she could seriously perfect her pitch to major league calibre.

Eri Yoshida signed a professional contract with a Japanese baseball team.

"She can pitch," said Yoshihiro Nakada, her manager in the Kansai Independent League. "The media attention we get from her is most welcome, but that's not why she is on our team. She's with us because she's an excellent pitcher."

Yoshida started pitching in Grade 2 after her father showed her a video of Boston Red Sox knuckleballer Tim Wakefield.

"I'm honoured that she patterned herself after me," Wakefield was quoted as saying recently. "I've heard great things about her. Apparently, she's amazing. I wish her the best of luck. Maybe I can learn something from her eventually. Nothing surprises me any more, so I wouldn't be surprised if she follows in the footsteps of other Japanese pitchers and winds up in the big leagues some day."

"The world is progressing," said Machiko Osawa, a professor at Japan Women's University. "The United States has an African-American president and Eri Yoshida has been accepted in the conservative world of sports.

"These are historical times."

Pregnant Matthew wins tournament
Catriona Matthew, five months pregnant with her second child, shot a 3-under 69 to win the inaugural HSBC LPGA Brazil Cup yesterday. The 39-year-old Scot finished five shots ahead of Kristy McPherson of the United States. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Kovalev the hometown hero

NHL ALL-STAR GAME

West 11 **East** 12 (SO)

VS

The Montreal Canadiens couldn't have asked for a better ending to all-star weekend.

A sellout crowd at the Bell Centre was roaring as the teams traded chances in overtime of the all-star game yesterday and absolutely exploded when Habs forward Alexei Kovalev scored what turned out to be the shootout winner.

Kovalev also scored twice in regulation as the Eastern Conference All-Stars pulled out a 12-11 victory over the West and earned the MVP honours as a result. He won a truck along with the adoration of the hometown crowd.

The game ended up turning into the showcase of skill it's intended to be and the fans in Montreal responded in kind. The city is in the midst of a hockey renaissance that seems to be culminating now with the celebration of the Habs centennial season.

"I think hockey is more popular now than it was in the '70s when we won four Cups in a row," said former Canadiens player Serge Savard. "They had 22,000 people at the workout yesterday morning. And you can see people in the streets, people with cars with flags, the waiting list for season tickets. I've never seen that like it is now."

Kovalev nearly had the hat trick, but had two different shots hit the post. Martin St. Louis also scored twice for the East while Alex Ovechkin, Eric Staal, Andrei Markov, Zach Parise, Evgeni Malkin, Dany Heatley and Jay Bouwmeester added singles. Ovechkin also scored in the shootout.

Sheldon Souray, with two, Keith Tkachuk, Patrick Marleau, Dan Boyle, Rick Nash, Milan Hejduk, Jarome Iginla, Shane Doan, Jonathan Toews and Patrick Kane replied for the Western Conference All-Stars. The nicest goal of the evening came off the stick of Malkin, who pulled the puck back between his legs before beating Niklas Backstrom at 7:45 of the second period.

Vincent Lecavalier was one of the few players not to register a point during the game. He also had a shootout attempt stopped. Even still, he received another hearty ovation from fans who desperately want to see the Tampa Bay Lightning captain get dealt to the Habs before the March 4 trade deadline.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

Montreal's Alexei Kovalev scores the shootout winner for the East on Roberto Luongo as Carlton the Bear looks on last night in Montreal

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Irons use a lot of energy. Save it by taking your clothes from the dryer and folding or hanging them up while they're warm. Better yet, hang your clothes to dry. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Going Green

Preview before printing

Save paper by using the print preview function to see if you can minimize font size or layout to cut down the number of pages that will be printed, according to Greeniology: How To Live Well, Be Green And Make A Difference by Tanya Ha.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: MIKE DEREZYCKY, MIKE.DEREZYCKY@METRONEWS.CA

Building for the future

There's an opportunity available to lay a new, greener infrastructure

EarthTones

Sophia Dore & Andrew Laursen

earthtones.metro@gmail.com

Windmills or other alternative power sources could support the economy into the future when oil is not readily available and carbon emissions are more strictly controlled.

Hello Metro readers. After a brief hiatus we, Earth Tones, are back.

Since we last spoke, many things have happened in the world. Most immediately relevant to most of us is that the bottom has fallen out of the world economy. So these days companies are worried about staying in business, not trading carbon credits, and individuals are worried about keeping their jobs and paying their mortgages, not about whether to buy a Smart Car or a Prius.

A year ago, the environment was consistently among the top three priorities for Canadians in opinion polls. These days, it doesn't even crack the top five. Is the environment still relevant in today's political and economic climate? Why should we take time away from worrying about our bank balances to worry about the Earth's balance?

First of all, we need to remember the things that were making headlines six months ago, before the headlines became dominated by who was bailing out whom and how much stock prices have fallen, are still happening now. They have just been eclipsed by things that may seem more immediately urgent.

Polar ice is still melting, CO_2 levels are still rising. These things don't stop because humans have dug themselves a financial hole. Although worldwide manufacturing has slowed, carbon emissions have not been reduced to a level that makes a difference to global warming. We need to decide whether the environment is a "luxury" that we consider only in times of plenty or whether it is our lifeline that we need to sustain at all times.

We also need to remember that our economy is "in transition." The benchmark for economic "downturns" is, of course, the Great Depression. During the Depression, many world leaders used deficit spending to finance huge infrastructure projects that laid the foundation for the modern economy.

"Spending one's way out of a recession" and running large budget deficits is controversial these days after the balanced budgets of the more prosperous years. However, in the past this has produced needed jobs and created infrastructure that transformed the economy.

We have before us an opportunity. The economic stimulus that we so urgently need can be used to lay a new infrastructure for a greener future. Massive investments in public transit can be made. New light-rail and bus systems can be integrated with existing systems so that in the future cars are simply not a necessity of day-to-day life the way they are today.

"We need to decide whether the environment is a 'luxury' that we consider only in times of plenty or whether it is our lifeline that we need to sustain at all times."

Similarly, the government plans to invest in industry, which will create jobs and confidence. Special consideration must be given to industries that will be environmentally sustainable and that will continue to support the economy into the future when oil is not readily available and carbon emissions are more strictly controlled.

So as we adjust to the new reality, let us hope that we can grow and change during these difficult times and emerge with an infrastructure that can carry us into a sustainable future.

Sophia Dore is an environmental scientist with Conestoga-Rovers & Associates. Andrew Laursen is an assistant professor at Ryerson University.

Wal-Mart rolls out demo store

TECHNOLOGY Wal-Mart Canada recently announced the opening of its first environmental demonstration store in Burlington, Ont., which features a first-of-its-kind application of geothermal technology in a large-scale Canadian retail operation and energy-conserving lighting innovations, among many other sustainable features.

This year, Wal-Mart Canada will begin to roll out prototypical stores that are 30 per cent more energy efficient.

The new Burlington supercentre is expected to use an estimated 60 per cent less energy than the company's typical supercentre store and to reduce carbon emissions by an estimated 141 tonnes. It is also expected to divert an estimated 85 per cent of its waste from landfill through a variety of recycling programs.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

News in brief

FUNDING The TD Friends of the Environment Foundation has funding available and is inviting non-profit organizations with a charitable registration number and schools to apply for funding online at www.fef.ca. "The risk is that in tough economic times, supporting the environment could move down the list of priorities for Canadians causing these non-profit groups to see a decline in funding for their projects," said Mary Desjardins, executive director, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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One lucky winner will be announced each Wednesday in Metro's ***NEW*** **METRO DRIVE** auto section. Approx. retail value of prize pack $650. Contest starts Monday, January 12, 2009 and closes at 11 PM on Tuesday, March 3, 2009. The final of eight winners will be announced Wednesday, March 4, 2009 in our ***NEW*** **METRO DRIVE** auto section. Contest rules and details are online at **metronews.ca**

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Billions for higher education in draft U.S. stimulus package
Recently, Democratic leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives released a draft of an $825-billion economic stimulus package, with tens of billions of dollars targeting higher education. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology

Unmet targets in Halifax

In its forthcoming 2009 Economic Scorecard Report, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce says regional universities are failing to meet the target of increasing admissions by 500 students a year. In 2008, 785 fewer students were attending Metro Halifax universities than in 2004, and "the declining trend is cause for concern," it said. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

The bitter reality of EI

Millions of Canadian workers pay employment insurance premiums their entire working lives giving little thought to what would happen if they lost their jobs tomorrow.

But as the global economic crisis deepens, tens of thousands facing layoff are learning the cruel truth.

Cuts in the early 1990s mean barely half of the country's unemployed today — and fewer than a quarter in Toronto — are eligible for benefits. Those lucky enough to qualify often get far less than poverty-level incomes. And for almost everyone scrambling to find work as the economy crumbles, benefits run out too soon.

As Stephen Harper's Conservatives put the final touches on tomorrow's budget, labour and business leaders alike are calling on Ottawa to mend Canada's tattered employment insurance program — and put money in the hands of those who need it most and are most likely to spend it now.

The United States Congress has already passed two federal extensions to state employment benefits, and a new bill could see many American workers laid off in the beginning of 2008 collect benefits for up to two years. Most Canadian observers believe Ottawa is also ready to act.

RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Former employees of Progressive Moulded Products, from left, Duc Phung Diep, Lincoln Meikle and Balvir Kaur Singh. The Vaughan plant went bankrupt last July.

For about 2,400 auto-parts workers who lost their jobs when Vaughan's Progressive Moulded Products plant went bankrupt last July, the fix cannot come soon enough.

- **BALVIR KAUR SINGH** worked full time at the factory for 17 years before dropping to part time last year after a workplace injury. As a result of changes to EI in the 1990s that boosted the number of hours a person has to work before qualifying for benefits, Singh initially didn't receive a cent. However, she was later awarded 17 weeks of EI sickness benefits.

"I am trying. Sometimes I cry. It's too hard," she says quietly in halting English.

- **SINGLE MOM DUC PHUNG DIEP** is drowning in debt because EI is paying her just $325 a week — or 55 per cent of her previous income. Laid-off workers during the last recession were eligible to receive 60 per cent of their earnings.

"How do we care for our children?" she asks. She came to Canada from a refugee camp in Vietnam in 1996 with her 4-year-old son.

- **LINCOLN MEIKLE'S** EI ran out Jan. 6 after just 38 weeks. Like most of his co-workers, he is still jobless and wondering how he will survive with no income. During the early 1990s, he could have received 50 weeks of employment insurance and then turned to a relatively generous welfare system to support him.

Economists, academics and unions want Ottawa to scrap EI entrance requirements based on regional unemployment rates and allow workers everywhere to qualify if they have worked 360 hours in the previous year.

This would include new entrants and those on special benefits, such as maternity or sick leave.

Workers currently need between 420 and 700 hours depending on regional unemployment rates before they qualify. New workers or those returning to the workforce after a two-year absence need between 840 and 910 hours and those seeking maternity or sick benefits need 600 hours.

Before 1996, workers only needed the equivalent of between 180 to 300 hours to qualify. For new entrants, it was just 300 hours.

Business and labour groups are calling on Ottawa to boost EI benefits — frozen for a decade after the cuts — to at least 60 per cent of earnings based on the best 12 weeks of pay in the previous 26 weeks.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

EI changes

CURRENT EI ELIGIBILITY

- Eligibility is based on regional unemployment rates and the number of hours worked in the previous 52 weeks. In areas where unemployment is less than 7 per cent, laid-off workers need between 665 and 700 hours before they can receive benefits. Where unemployment tops 13 per cent, they need just 420 hours. New entrants need between 840 and 910 hours and those seeking sickness or maternity benefits need 600 hours.

SUGGESTED CHANGE

- Eligibility for all workers — including those seeking sickness and maternity benefits — at a uniform 360 weeks.

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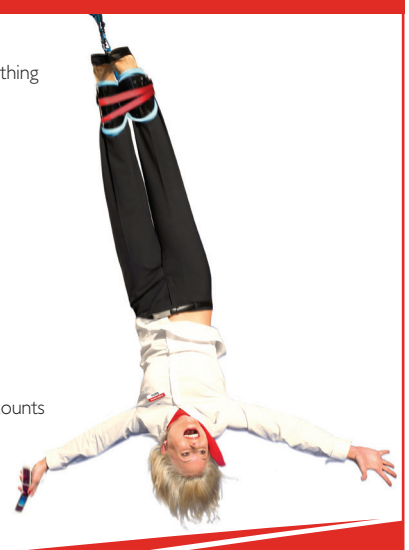

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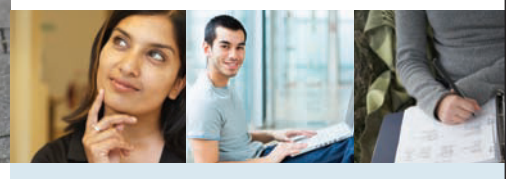

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Metro Workology exclusive: Curtain Call

Don't miss Curtain Call, Metro's exclusive feature series in the Workology section. In the realm of death there are some interesting, lucrative and mysterious career opportunities; we will be digging up the stories for you, so check for Workology on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Metronews.ca/work as well.

For the avid skier or snowboarder, snowmaking can be a very rewarding career.

Snow in the hill, then ski it yourself

Odd**Jobs**

The Lowdown

Job title: Snowmaker
Salary: Starts at $14.25/hour
Education/training: On the job training; ability to ski and knowledge of snow through courses
Best Part of the Job: "Being in control and skiing every day."
Worst Part of the Job: "Babysitting. I deal with a lot of 19- and 20-year-olds on my staff."

If you're an avid skier, you'll be envious of Jodie McCutcheon. "It's a dream job," says the 37-year-old snowmaking, roads and parking manager for the Whistler Blackcomb ski resort in Whistler, B.C. "I work days, I have technology at my disposal, I make darn good money and I get to ski a lot."

McCutcheon manages a staff of as many as a hundred people, including six millwrights that do equipment repairs year-round and a large staff of seasonal snowmakers who work from October to January. These mostly young men work 12-hour shifts operating 270 snowmaking guns. These guns shoot out water that turns into snow when combined with air. Snowmaking staff adjusts the water pressure and the direction of the guns, plus they move them around the mountain and shovel.

It's McCutcheon's job to decide if it's cold enough to make snow (it's less efficient to make snow once it gets up to -1C), assess the quality of the artificial snow and map out where the guns are going next.

He gets to his computer about 5:30 a.m. Cameras on the mountain helps him assess the snow and equipment. He also schedules his staff, checks the weather, monitors the water level in the resort's reservoir and looks ahead to upcoming ski competition and events that will need additional snow.

By about 8:15 a.m. he's outside on skis, checking the slopes and the guns. By lunch he's back in the office again, and his workday ends by 2 or 3 p.m.

McCutcheon comes from a farm in northern B.C. and briefly studied arts at university. In 1991 he moved to Whistler to be a ski bum. He started working for the mountain in equipment rentals and then as a ski patroller.

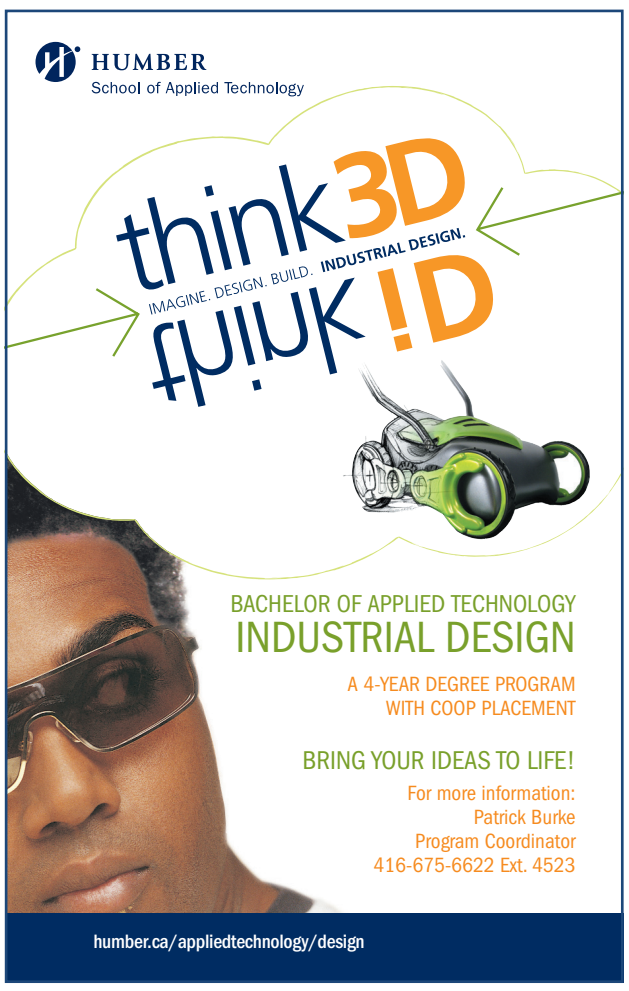
He had some friends who did snowmaking, and he liked what he heard about the job. "It was mechanical, very hands-on, very physical. And it was away from customer service. I thought I'd like it."

He joined the seasonal team in 1998. In the summer he worked as a carpenter. When the snowmaking season ended each year, he was free to ski or take a warm beach holiday.

The resort started investing more in snowmaking. McCutcheon was great with computers and technology, and started moving up the ranks. Eighteen months ago, his boss moved on and he found himself head of snowmaking operations.

It's safe to say, this guy knows snow.

Diane Peters once hawked magic pens at the Canadian National Exhibition. She's now a writer and part-time journalism instructor.



Catching criminals by their loops and curls

Curtain Call

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

For Dr. Atul Singla, a Phd in forensic document examination, the toughest part of his job is convincing people it's for real.

"We have to convince the laypersons that it's not just guesswork; it's a science and it's based on scientific principles just like the other sciences," he said from his Scarborough office.

The handwriting identification expert, born in the Patiala District of Punjab, India, has practised the science for the past 25 years, mostly in his home country.

He moved his business, Worldwide Forensic Services Inc., to Canada in 2005.

Unlike other industries, his business is booming and one of his clients even suggested it might grow as a result of the enduring recession.

"She said, 'Dr. Singla, you're going to be busy,' and she said, 'you'll see, because of the recession there will be more forgeries and frauds,'" the soft-spoken doctor said with a chuckle.

"I'm not sure," he said. "And I don't want people making frauds or forgeries — not for my sake."

While most of his work revolves around civil cases or insurance claims, he has been called upon to help solve murder, assault and sexual assault cases.

In any case, he said, the work is time consuming and meticulous.

"We have to examine the minute details such as writing pressure and the angle of the writing and shading," he said.

There are many factors the handwriting identification expert must take into consideration when comparing signatures or writing, he said.

"The range of variation due to the environment and external factors such as the age of the writer, their writing position, writing instrument, health conditions of the writer and alcohol consumption," he said.

Singla knew from the age of eight, after devouring dozens of Sherlock Holmes novels, he wanted to be a forensic scientist.

He studied the discipline at Punjabi University and after many steps went on to earn his doctorate.

He said he's likely one of the few handwriting analysis experts in the country with a doctorate because Canada's highest formal recognition in forensics is a bachelor's degree.

Uncertain future?

- With advancements in technology and the paperless office, Dr. Atul Singla doesn't expect there will be many future openings in his field.

For more of the Curtain Call exclusive series check the Workology section Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays or stop by Metronews.ca/work

Metro Workology exclusive: Curtain Call
Don't miss Curtain Call, Metro's exclusive feature series in the Workology section. In the realm of death there are some interesting, lucrative and mysterious career opportunities; we will be digging up the stories for you, so check for Workology on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Metronews.ca/work as well.

When only bones can speak

Curtain Call

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

When only bones remain, it's the job of a forensic anthropologist to piece together a person's past.

Dr. Martin Evison, 47, is one such forensic anthropologist skilled at unravelling the stories bones often tell.

Evison, a native of the United Kingdom, came to Canada in 2005 and now directs the forensic science program at the University of Toronto.

From skeletal remains, Evison can estimate a person's age, sex, height and ancestry, alongside other details, though he insists the results can never be considered foolproof since health, genetics and environment can impact a person's identity greatly.

"Sometimes the accuracy of these methods is overstated. Experts will say they've determined the age when all they've really done is estimated the age," Evison said.

RAFAEL BRUSILOW/FOR METRO CANADA
Forensic anthropologist Dr. Martin Evison.

However, forensic anthropology can have dramatic effects on an investigation. One case he remembers in particular involved an unidentified skeleton with a missing finger tip and signs of stress on the victim's right elbow. This helped determine that the victim had worked as a buffer in the cutlery industry, constantly extending his arm as he polished cutlery. Evidence of surgical procedures on the bones suggested the male victim had bunyans on his feet as well as arthritis in several joints. Within days of releasing the information to the public, U.K. police received enough leads to eventually arrest and charge a father and son with the murder of an elder Yemeni man.

> **"It's really an artistic process with a limited scientific basis."**
> Dr. Martin Evison

Evison also has experience in reconstructing facial appearance from a skull, an astounding but highly controversial technique within the field of forensic anthropology, due in large part to its subjective nature. While musculature can be accurately recreated from a skull, either by hand using a substance like clay or with specialized software on a computer, vital details such as the depth of each muscle and facial features on the skin can only be guessed at.

"It's really an artistic process with a limited scientific basis, but you can get a resemblance, if not an exact likeness," Evison said.

Ultimately, Evison says the point of facial reconstructions is a means to get family, friends and acquaintances to call in with leads.

In his career, Evison has investigated human rights abuses throughout some of the world most troubling recent conflicts in places such as Kosovo and Kenya, where too often only bones remain to speak for the dead.

"To be able to make even a small contribution to the situation in places like that, I feel it's important."

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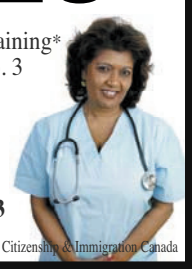
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Senator in Travolta case resigns
The Bahamas senator arrested over an alleged plot to extort money from movie star John Travolta has resigned from her post, despite vowing to prove her innocence. IMDB.COM

Entertainment

Miss America
Katie Stam of Indiana was crowned Miss America on Saturday, fighting off a throat infection, laryngitis and 51 other contestants to win the pageant. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Box office

1. **Paul Blart: Mall Cop:** $21.5 million US
2. **Underworld: Rise of the Lycans:** $20.7 million
3. **Gran Torino:** $16 million
4. **Hotel for Dogs:** $12.4 million
5. **Slumdog Millionaire:** $10.5 million
6. **My Bloody Valentine: 3D:** $10 million
7. **Inkheart:** $7.7 million
8. **Bride Wars:** $7 million
9. **Curious Case of Benjamin Button:** $6 million
10. **Notorious:** $5.7 million

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Design diversity

Reality series showcases Canadian fashions

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

On one side of the catwalk sit nervous budding designers, their eyes the sole indicators of any present jitters. Judgment, on the other hand, flows from the facial expressions of the fashion professionals who scribble notes as garments slink by on the svelte limbs of the models on parade.

This vogue vision is not filling the tents at Toronto Fashion Week, nor the seasonal debuts in New York or Paris. The scene is ripped from the unexpectedly stylish streets of Ottawa, the backdrop for the second season of design reality program Project Runway Canada, in which 14 aspiring designers compete for $100,000.

"The style in Ottawa tends to be thought of as conservative and high quality, with embassies and ambassadors and all kinds of high-end events," said Andrea Gabourie, the series' executive producer. "But I think there's a real emerging diversity in fashion here ... One of our goals with the show is making Canadians excited about knowing who the Canadian fashion designers are and buying their clothes."

Elevating designers into national recognition is largely established by the immediacy with which the show allows a complete unknown to display their construction and design abilities not just to the Canadian public, but also to internationally respected designers.

ready for takeoff

- Project Runway Canada premieres on Global TV tomorrow night at 10 p.m.

Brian Bailey is one of them. The women's sportswear and eveningwear designer and Canada's first to produce complementary collections for both traditional and plus sizes returns this season to mentor the contestants.

"It's about immediate brand building," Bailey said. "It's about delivering into the hearts and homes of Canadians across Canada that watch television that we have a Canadian design industry and that (its designers) are fabulous! That's a damn nice Canadian thing to say, isn't it?"

But, while it may be nice to make Canadian designers feel special, there's no denying the misconception that the show is a fashion stepchild to the United States, says this season's host supermodel Iman.

"They have no idea how great their talent is, so they don't bring their game on because they think, 'Oh where will it go?'

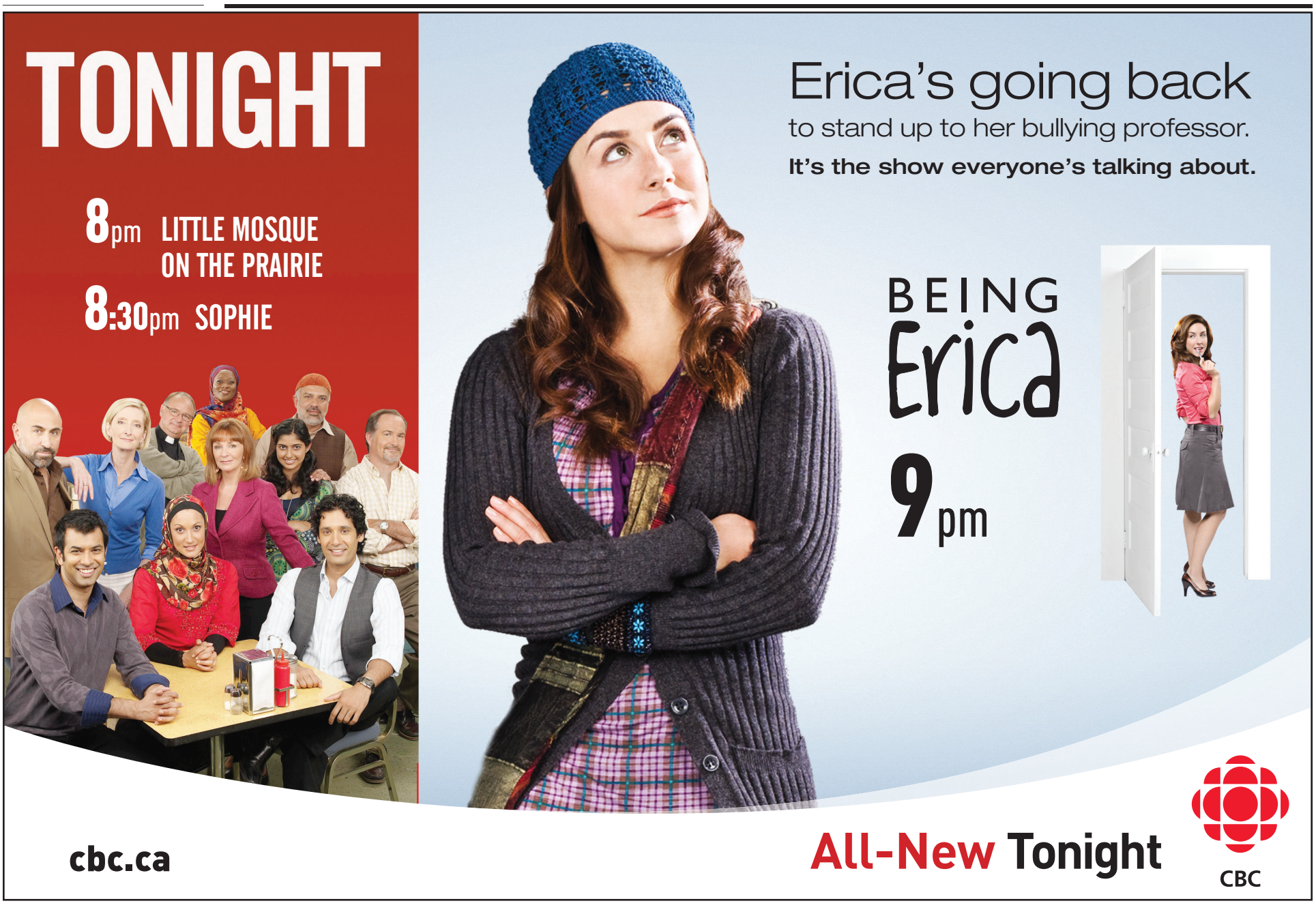
"Fashion is global. There's not just a Canadian designer."

She begs to prove the Canadian designers wrong by bringing her industry expertise to the table.

"By sheer luck, wouldn't it be great if I discovered the genius of tomorrow?" she says, with a roar of laughter.

PHOTO: HANDOUT

Supermodel Iman returns as host of Project Runway Canada.



Rourke avoids seeing himself onscreen

Mickey Rourke still hasn't seen his Golden Globe-winning and Oscar nominated performance in The Wrestler, because he hates seeing himself onscreen, imdb.com reports. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Rise of the superbore

Underworld: Rise of **The Lycans**

Director: Patrick Tatopoulos
Stars: Rhona Mitra, Michael Sheen, Bill Nighy
Classification: 18A
Rating:

IAN GORMELY
for Metro Canada

It's a remarkable feat that the Underworld series of films have managed to make a war between vampires and werewolves so boring.

Underworld: Rise of the Lycans, the third (and fingers crossed for final) instalment is a prequel, fleshing out the origin of the centuries long struggle between these two creatures of the night. Thing is if you've seen the first two films (Underworld and Underworld: Evolution) you'll already know this tale; both films spent plenty of screen time creating this back-story through flashbacks and over-the-top monologues.

As for viewers who managed to miss these cinematic gems, do you really care?

Rise of the Lycans' plot revolves around two star-crossed lovers, but instead of Montagues and Capulets, it's vampires and lycans. Sonia (played by Doomsday's Rhona Mitra) loves lycan slave Lucian (a slumming Michael Sheen) much to the chagrin of her vampire king father Viktor (a humourless Bill Nighy).

When Viktor has his daughter killed for her transgressions, Lucian flips, rallies the other werewolf slaves and all hell breaks loose.

Being a prequel, Rise of the Lycans is freed from the need to bring viewers up to speed with a convoluted back-story something that dragged down its predecessors. So this is the most accessible and straightforward film in the trilogy.

That said, for all the effort that has been made to flesh out the world in which the Underworld series exists the characters that inhabit it are one-dimensional archetypes.

And this really wouldn't be a problem if the action sequences, which should really be the backbone of this film, weren't so dull. The choreographed gunplay that typified the first two movies has been replaced with sword fight retreads mixed with Matrix copping aerial stunts. But it's Rise of the Lycans' refusal to have fun that's its undoing.

This could have been a great bad movie, but instead it's just boring.

Michael Sheen stars in Underworld: Rise of the Lycans.

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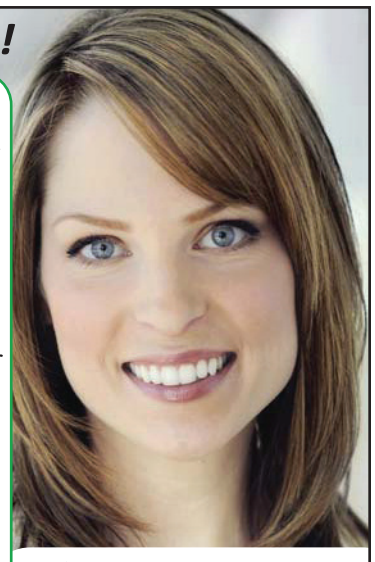

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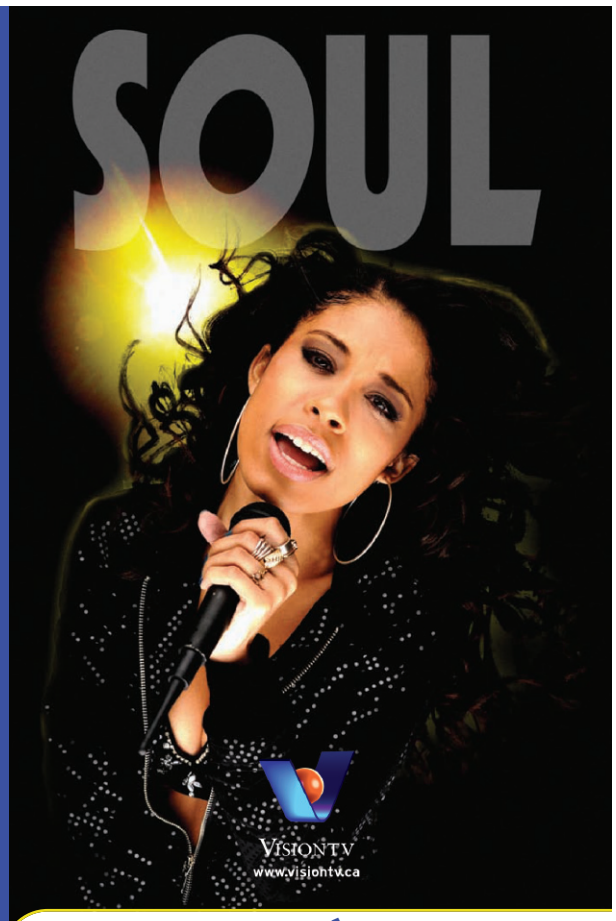

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Slumdog scores again
Slumdog Millionaire has won the top award from the Producers Guild of America. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Vets win big at SAGs

Streep, Penn take best actress/actor awards

Meryl Streep of Doubt and Sean Penn of Milk won lead-acting honours at the Screen Actors Guild Awards last night.

GETTY IMAGES

Meryl Streep and Sean Penn accept the best actress and actor awards at the Screen Actors Guild Awards last night.

Heath Ledger's psychopathic reinvention of Batman bad guy the Joker in The Dark Knight earned him the supporting-actor honour, while Kate Winslet was the winner of the supporting-actress award for the Holocaust-themed drama The Reader.

"It's really an honour to be included in what I think is such a remarkable year," Winslet said. "I really feel like everybody should be given a medal."

The role already earned Winslet the same prize at the Golden Globes, where she also won lead dramatic actress for Revolutionary Road. But at the Oscars, Winslet has just one nomination, as lead actress for The Reader.

As it did at the Golden Globes, 30 Rock swept the TV comedy honours, Tina Fey and Alec Baldwin taking the individual acting prizes and the show winning the ensemble cast award.

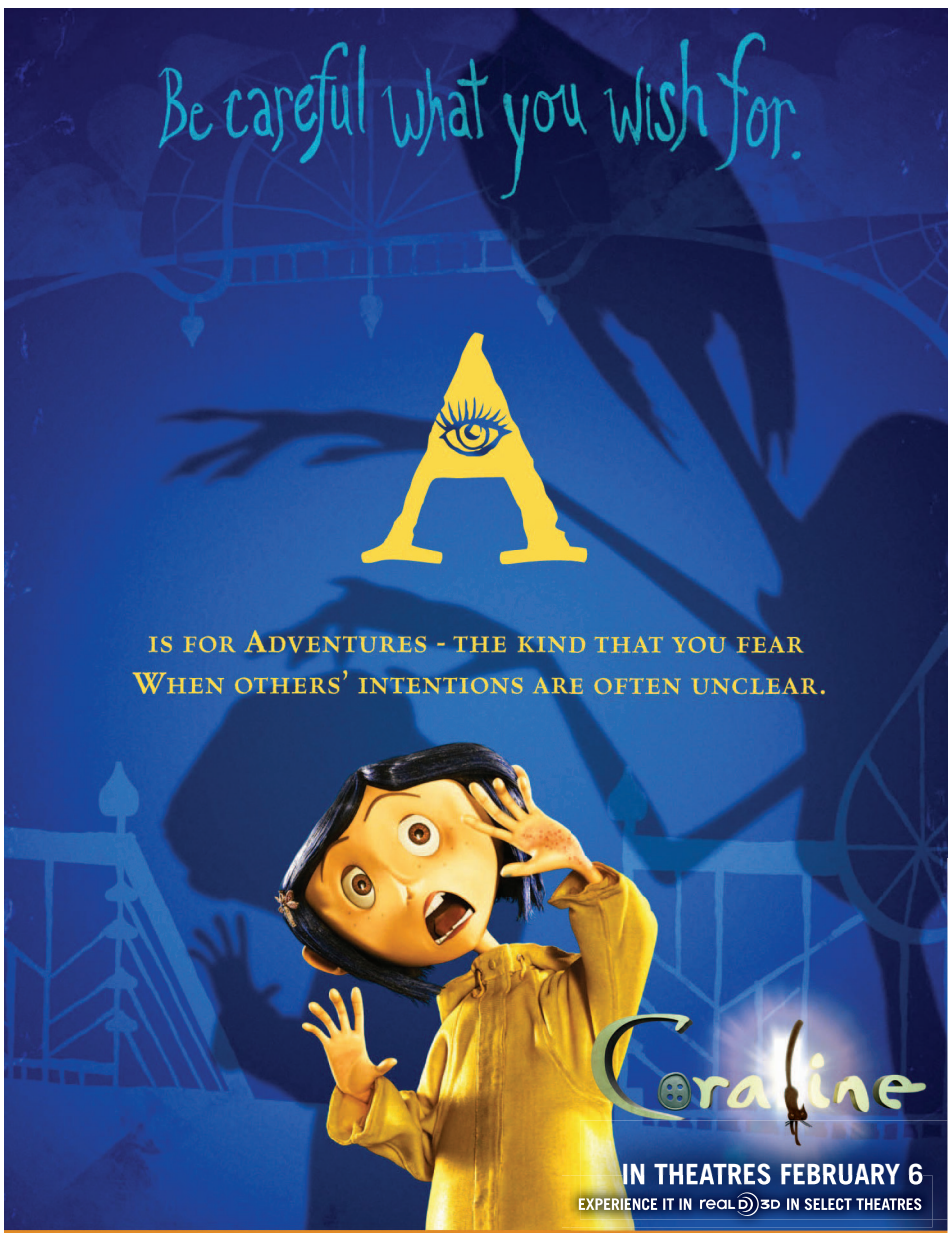
Fey, creator and star of the series set behind the scenes at a sketch-comedy show, lobbed a wisecrack at Hollywood producers, who have battled Hollywood trade guilds over actors, writers and others' share of potential profits from web programming.

Joking that one day, her young daughter would be old enough to watch reruns of 30 Rock on the Internet, Fey said, "She'll look up at me and say, 'What do you mean, you don't get residuals for this?'"

Hugh Laurie won his second straight SAG prize for best actor in a TV drama for House.

Sally Field earned the TV drama actress award for the family series Brothers & Sisters, while Mad Men was named best drama show.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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A couple's letters to their infant son

A Journal for **Jordan**
Author: Dana Canedy
Publisher: Crown Publishers
Price: $30 (Hardcover)

That Went **Well**
Author: Terrell Harris Dougan
Publisher: Hyperion
Price: $29.95 (Hardcover)

Hope & **Despair**
Author: Monia Mazigh
Publisher: McClelland & Stewart
Price: $34.99 (Hardcover)

BookPicks

When 1st Sgt. Charles King was killed in Iraq in 2006, he left behind a 200-page journal for his infant son Jordan, which offered the boy lessons on life and love. In A Journal for Jordan, King's widow Dana Canedy constructs her own letters to their son, combining excerpts from her husband's journal with an intimate account of her relationship with her husband.

After her sister Irene was born in 1946, Terrell Harris Dougan's life turned upside down. Irene was mentally disabled, and the family had to decide whether to institutionalize their beloved daughter, as was then the norm, or try to integrate her into society. They chose the latter, and this book is Dougan's comic, touching account of growing up with Irene and how caring for her impacted her parents' lives and her own pursuit of normalcy.

Maher Arar didn't make it home to Canada from a family vacation in Tunisia in 2002. In Hope & Despair, Arar's wife Monia Mazigh recounts discovering he'd been detained on suspicion of ties to al-Qaida, his deportation to Syria and subsequent torture. Mazigh relives that time in unrelenting detail: She raised their two children alone, struggled with the Canadian government and worked tirelessly for a reunion.

BRIAN COULTON/FOR METRO CANADA

Robinson in running for top book award

BOOKS Presidential favourite Marilynne Robinson, the late Roberto Bolano of Chile and a memoir about Africa featured last year at Starbucks are among the finalists for the National Book Critics Circle prizes.

Robinson is a finalist for Home, a companion to her previous novel, Gilead. President Barack Obama has praised that Pulitzer Prize-winning book.

Bolano, who died in 2003 but has become increasingly popular as his work is translated into English, was nominated for the book 2666. Winners will be announced March 12. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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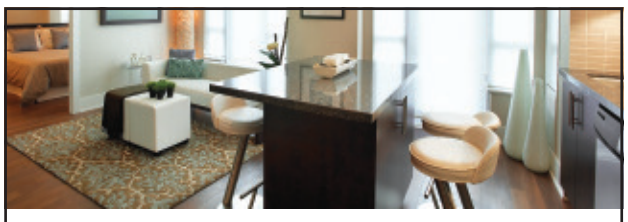

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Lipstick Jungle stage manager accused of stealing

A stage manager has been charged with stealing $30,000 US of designer bags and clothing from the television show Lipstick Jungle and trying to sell them on eBay. Arthur Moreira, 27, was arrested after investigators posing as buyers found missing items at his apartment. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Being Ab Fab in L.A.

(Los Angeles) matches England's abject celeb culture and exceeds it for flaky new age trends, so the writers shouldn't have a problem mining their hometown for fecund material (for Absolutely Fabulous).

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

WHAT'S THE AMERICAN FOR 'SWEETIE DARLING'? Fox is apparently pressing ahead with an Americanized version of Absolutely Fabulous, the BBC comedy that debuted in 1992 and sporadically produced five seasons and several specials.

I'm a big fan of the original show, which was, at its best, one of the most caustic and inspired pieces of social satire put on television.

I'm also no longer confident of my abilities to predict how well Americanizations of British shows will fare; I dismissed NBC's version of The Office before it premiered, and despite a miserable false start, ABC's Life on Mars turned out a lot better than my dire predictions.

While it's good news that Jennifer Saunders — one of the stars and creators of the original — will be executive producing the Fox version, there's still good reason to be worried about the show, which has been given a pilot order according to Variety and could hit the air by the fall.

WHAT COULD GO RIGHT: According to Variety, they've set the show in Los Angeles, which isn't exactly the centre of the fashion industry in America, but that could work; anyone who's watched a couple of seasons of Project Runway knows that the biggest loose cannons on the show are often products of L.A.'s fashion scene.

And anyone who's spent time in the boutiques of Hollywood or Beverly Hills can tell you that L.A. has money and taste in inverse proportions — as little of the latter as it has much of the former. Last year the stores were filled with pricey versions of what heavy metal groupies were wearing in the mid-80s; it would be rich to see Fox's version of Edina making her entrance swathed in L.A.'s take on the original show's Christian Lacroix tat.

The city matches England's abject celeb culture and exceeds it for flaky New Age trends, so the writers shouldn't have a problem mining their hometown for fecund material, and hopefully the casting director will be able to provide cameos and guest spots from celebrities on the A, B and Z lists willing to lampoon themselves.

WHAT COULD GO WRONG: For the life of me I can't think of any Americans able to match Saunders' or (especially) Joanna Lumley's crucial roles in the show; even in England, it was hard to imagine anyone willing to humiliate themselves by embodying such grandly irredeemable characters.

Faced with this obstacle, the writers and producers could scale back the show's comic ambitions, at which point it'll be dead in the water. I am, of course, happy to be proved wrong.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

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cable variety — primetime — 1/26/09

TO	Vu	SC	C		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime	265	353	2	TVO	Time Team (N)		The Agenda With Steve Paikin		Midsomer Murders		Milosevic on Trial (N)		Agenda-Paikin
	211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	House "Big Baby" (N)		24 (HDTV PA) (N)		Captain Cook: Obsession		News (N)
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
	210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Little Mosque	Sophie (N)	Being Erica (HDTV) (N)		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		The Bachelor (N)				True Beauty (N)		News (N)
	212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	Big Bang Th	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Corner Gas	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		News (N)
	218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	The Soup	How I Met	*The Last Templar* (2009, Adventure) Mira Sorvino.				News (N)
	137	763	13	TFO	Panorama		Dans le secret des pierres		*Gouttes d'eau sur pierres brûlantes* (1999)			Y'a pas d'âge	Professionels
	-	-	14	-	Raymond	Raymond	News (N)		News (N)		Two/Half Men	King	Young Rebels
	213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	Funniest Pets	Funniest Pets	One Tree Hill (HDTV)		To Serve and Protect		Becker
	-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	Big Bang Th	How I Met	Two/Half Men	Worst Week	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		News (N)
	-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Superstars of Dance (N)		*The Last Templar* (2009, Adventure)		Mira Sorvino.		News (N)
	-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	The Bachelor (N)				True Beauty (N)		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Gossip Girl (HDTV)		Paris Hilton's My New BFF		Old Christine	Old Christine	News (N)
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	House "Big Baby" (N)		24 (HDTV PA) (N)		Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Time Goes By	Antiques Roadshow (N)		Magnificent Mind at Any Age With Dr. Daniel Amen				Business Rpt.
	297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	Gossip Girl (HDTV)		One Tree Hill (HDTV)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
	298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Friends	KTLA News	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Gossip Girl
news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Business	Politics With Don Newman (N)		CBC News: The National		Conspiracy Files Lockerbie (N)		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79	CNB	CNBC Reports (HDTV)				Ultimate Fighting		On the Money		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22	net	World Combat League		The Ultimate Fighter		Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
	400	400	30	TSN	AHL Hockey All-Star Game. (HDTV) From Worcester, Mass. (Live)						Tennis: Australian Open -- Quarterfinals		
	411	457	58	OLN	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman (N)		Mantracker		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman
	417	406	81	SC	NASCAR Pre.	Pass Time (N)	SuperCars	SuperCars	My Classic Car	My Classic Car	Barrett-Jackson		NASCAR Pre.
family	551	542	25	YTV	Adrenaline Proj	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Zixx Level	Falcon Beach		Mystery Hnt.
	554	544	45	TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN	6TEEN	Misadventures	Futurama	American Dad	Robot Chicken	Life's a Zoo
	556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
cable variety	602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	How Clean	Kim	Love It or List It		Save Us-House	Smart Cookies	Maxed Out
	570	580	29	MM	Meet Barkers	Meet Barkers	Instant Star	Instant Star	MuchTopTens (N)		MuchNews	The NewMusic	MuchVibe
	615	520	31	A&E	CSI: Miami "Whacked"		Intervention "Lawrence"		Intervention "Anthony"		Paranormal	Paranormal	Paranormal
	700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Se Forte Maestro		Distretto Di Polizia		Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
	571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	Revival	Listed		Don't Forget the Lyrics!		Don't Forget the Lyrics!		Where You At
	575	583	38	CMT	All About (N)	All About	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	CMT Star
	616	521	39	SHO	The Outer Limits		Kink in Hair	Kink in Hair	Kenny-Spenny	Rent-A-Goalie	Name Is Earl	Testees	House
	620	523	40	BVO	Hot Dance	Dance With Me	Eva: The Price of Passion		Symphonic Landscapes Kent Nagano.			Eric Lagace	Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Tabatha's Salon Takeover		Tim Gunn's Guide to Style		ET Canada
	522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Sharif Returns"		Tiger Spirit North and South Korea.			Vimy Under	NCIS "Sharif Returns"		Crime Stories
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Zach Galifianakis: Live		Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	For Rent	Income Prop.	Property Virgin	House Hunters	Ambrose Price	Petal Pushers	Holmes-Homes
	294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	House-Payne	House-Payne	House-Payne	House-Payne	Welcome to	Welcome to	Seinfeld
	576	582	49	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*Getting Played* (2005, Romance-Comedy) Carmen Electra.				Baldwin Hills	Baldwin Hills	Judge Hatchett
	627	528	50	SPC	Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		Lost "Pilot" (Part 1 of 2)		Star Trek: Voyager		Ghost Hunters		Stargate SG-1
	581	566	52	MTV	The City	City Live After	MTV News	Cribs (N)	Bromance		The City	City Live After	MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	TV Made, Do It	News Show	Tube Tales	E News	Make or Break	TV Made, Do It	Planet Soap	Reality	Deal-No Deal
	603	561	56	FOOD	Chef at Home	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		Food Detective	Road Tasted	Hell's Kitchen		Chef School
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Eyes Down	May-December	McLeod's Daughters (N)		God Bless	Clergy	Poltergeist
	621	527	63	STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (N)		TMZ (N)	etalk	First Class All the Way		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
	553	546	65	TRE	Wonder Pets	Nght Grdn	Friend Rabbit	Franklin	Little Bear	Miss Spider	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Max & Ruby
	115	711	101	TVA	Les Gags (N)	Bloopers TVA	Juste pour rire (SC)		Dr. House (HDTV) (SC)		TVA 22 heures	(10:45) Denis Lévesque	
	126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
	526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy		Commander In Chief		Commander In Chief		Truth, Duty, Valour		Mediums
	300	601	301	M1	Stargate Atlantis		Sanctuary (Part 2 of 2)		U.S. of Tara	Secret Diary	ZOS Zone of Separation		Atlantis
	305	612	306	PIX	*Cape Fear*	(7:20) *Little Criminals* (1995)			*Top Gun* ★★★ (1986, Adventure) Tom Cruise.				*Best Bad*

critics' corner

Being Erica
In this new episode, Erica has a new boss who's a real bully. To help her gain the confidence to confront him, Dr. Tom sends her back to university for a do-over with a fearsome professor. Tyron Leitso also stars in "The Secret of Now." 9 PM on CBC

The Big Bang Theory
Interventions are usually about getting someone to stop doing something. But in this episode, it's all about getting a behavior started. Sheldon, you see, has a fear of driving, and Leonard and his other friends think it's time he faced his fear and got behind the wheel in "The Euclid Alternative." 8 PM on CTV CBS

CSI: Miami
Season six ended with a literal bang, as head CSI Horatio Caine (David Caruso) was gunned down on an airstrip. In this reprise of the seventh-season premiere, his colleagues pull out all the stops to find the shooter, crossing paths with some of Miami's most unsavory characters — one of whom is shockingly familiar. 10 PM on CTV CBS

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt
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Two on the way
Actress Molly Ringwald is preparing for double trouble — she's expecting twins, imdb.com reports. The Breakfast Club star, 40, has announced she is pregnant with a boy and a girl, according to People.com. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Prince dumped

ROMANCE British royal Prince Harry has been ditched by his long-term love Chelsy Davy — ending their five-year romance, imdb.com reports.

The pair parted ways following a series of tearful phone calls, according to British tabloid the News of the World.

And a source tells the publication that despite making the decision, 23-year-old Zimbabwean Davy is 'distraught' at the split.

The insider adds, "She has simply had enough. They have been going through what she calls a 'rough patch' and she didn't see the point in going on.

"Their lives have been moving in different directions. Chelsy is about to embark on a career in law and being a royal girlfriend can be quite limiting."

A royal source told the tabloid the romance had simply 'run its course,' and that the pair were still on friendly terms.

The split marks an overall troublesome time for the 24-year-old prince — he was also embroiled in a race row after a film showing him referring to an Army colleague as "P*ki" was released.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Angie's ex-bodyguard may release tell-all

SCANDAL Angelina Jolie's Oscar nomination celebrations have been marred by reports her former bodyguard is planning a tell-all which will set out to prove the actress moved in on partner Brad Pitt when he was still married to Jennifer Aniston, imdb.com reports.

Sources claim the actress, who was nominated for a Best Actress Academy Award on Thursday, is seeking legal counsel to block Mickey Brett's expose, which will also expose intimate details of her courtship and sex life with Pitt.

A publishing insider tells In Touch Weekly magazine, "He (Brett) knows everything about Angelina. It's going to be one of the most explosive books ever written."

Brett, who headed up the Jolie/Pitt's security detail when the couple went into hiding in Namibia before the birth of baby daughter Shiloh in 2006, was reportedly fired by Pitt last year. The insider also tells In Touch Weekly, "The (book) will include all the sordid details of how they (Pitt and Jolie) got together while Brad was still married to Jennifer Aniston."

Pitt attempted to clear up those rumours in a recent interview after Jolie revealed the couple had met and fallen in love on the set of action film Mr. & Mrs. Smith, which was made when the movie hunk was still married. He insisted there was no "dastardly affair."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Hathaway lauds curvier figures

IMAGE Actress Anne Hathaway has championed Scarlett Johansson and Beyonce Knowles for their curvy figures, praising the pair as good role models for youngsters, imdb.com reports.

She says, "I don't think it's just Hollywood that gives out that message. As a society we put out these unrealistic body images to young women.

"But I'm a normal shape and Scarlett Johansson is not a skinny, skinny girl. Beyonce Knowles looks after herself and has a beautiful body. Reese Witherspoon looks great."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sex And The City star denies split

RUMOURS Sex And The City star Sarah Jessica Parker has dismissed rumours she is set to split from her husband Matthew Broderick, imdb.com reports.

The couple has been dogged by rumours of an impending split ever since August when American tabloid, Star, claimed Broderick, 46, had an affair with a younger woman.

And fresh speculation arose recently, with Internet gossips claiming Parker had been spotted visiting a New York realtor to prepare for moving out of the family's Manhattan home.

But Parker and Broderick have been putting on a united front, appearing in public together on Thursday night to see Broadway play, The American Plan.

And Parker brushed off the break-up rumours, telling People.com, "This is date night. It was really lovely. We don't even bother to address them (the reports)."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

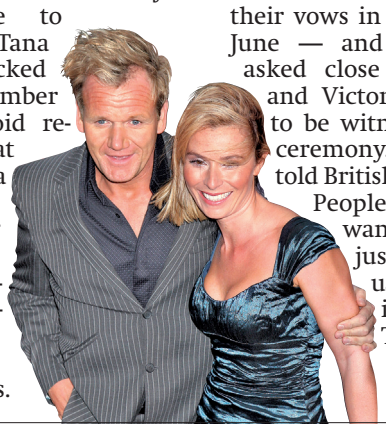
Ramsays to renew vows

MARRIAGE TV chef Gordon Ramsay is set to renew his wedding vows — just months after allegations he cheated on his wife, imdb.com reports.

The F Word star's 12-year marriage to wife Tana was rocked in November by tabloid reports that he had a long-standing affair with "serial mistress" Sarah Symonds.

Yet Ramsay firmly denied the rumours, claiming: "It never happened. It was completely made up. She set it up to make some money." Now the couple have decided to cement their vows in London this June — and have even asked close pals David and Victoria Beckham to be witnesses at the ceremony. A source told British tabloid The People, "Gordon wants to show just how infatuated he still is with Tana."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Engagement rumours false: Gisele

ENGAGEMENT Supermodel Gisele Bundchen has dismissed reports she and American football star Tom Brady are engaged, imdb.com reports.

The pair has been subjected to repeated engagement rumours over the past month.

Separate reports alleged New England Patriots quarterback Brady had proposed on Christmas Eve and popped the question earlier this month.

But Leonardo DiCaprio's ex-girlfriend insists she has no sparkling ring to show off to pals.

She says, "I don't know how people are so creative. First they said he proposed to me in a plane. Imagine, it was December 24, Christmas, we were flying to Boston, then there was some champagne and we celebrated the date.

"Now there's a new rumour that he proposed to me on last Friday (sic). I wasn't even there (with him), how can that be true?"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Charlie's Angels back for more

PEOPLE Drew Barrymore, Lucy Liu and Cameron Diaz are set to return to the big screen as Charlie's Angels for a third film, imdb.com reports.

Six years after the sequel Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle, the trio is ready to go again.

Barrymore says, "I'm so into it... They're hard movies to make, but they're fun."

And sources tell Eonline.com that the three angels are looking to add a fourth lovely lady to the mix for their second sequel, which is set to start shooting later this year.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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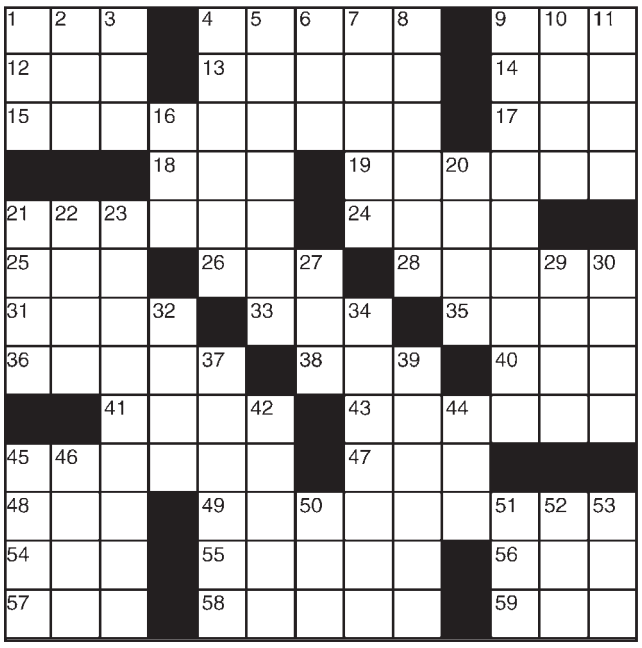


Crossword across

1 Exercise in the park
4 Duel tool
9 Method
12 Actress Gardner
13 "..., excavating for —"
14 A Gershwin brother
15 Potbelly
17 Fresh
18 Pub order
19 Greek islander
21 Moves on momentum
24 Loathe
25 Melody
26 Conk out
28 Sounds contented
31 Church furniture
33 Pompous sort
35 Golfer Aoki
36 Wields scissors
38 Snapshot
40 Old French coin
41 Memorandum
43 Second of two
45 Inn
47 Historic period
48 "That tastes awful!"
49 Wisconsin lake
54 Bikini half
55 Draw out
56 Prune
57 Stitch
58 Discourage
59 "Monty Python" opener

Crossword down

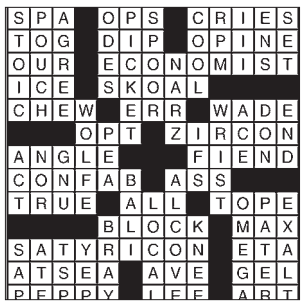
1 Pugilist's shot
2 Eggs
3 Festive
4 Went like Columbus
5 Serious forgetfulness
6 Auction action
7 Tennyson's "— Arden"
8 Swathe anew
9 Maxwell Anderson play
10 Neighborhood
11 Show boredom
16 Bankroll
20 Needle case
21 Spaces
22 Collateral option
23 "Rich Man, Poor Man" author
27 Kreskin's claim
29 Track competition
30 Acerbic
32 Dalmatian feature
34 Librarian's request
37 Intoxicated
39 Life's work
42 Skip a phoneme
44 Bill
45 Centers
46 Shrek is one
50 Enthusiast
51 Foreman foe
52 Understood
53 Harvest goddess

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	3						4	
		2				6		
1	9		6	2	8		7	3
	8		9		2		3	
2								9
	4		8		7		5	
4	6		7	9	5		2	8
		3				7		
	7						6	

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:



5	3	4	8	9	2	7	6	1
7	2	8	1	6	3	5	4	9
1	6	9	5	4	7	8	3	2
9	5	1	7	3	6	2	8	4
3	4	7	2	8	5	9	1	6
2	8	6	4	1	9	3	5	7
8	9	3	6	7	1	4	2	5
4	1	2	9	5	8	6	7	3
6	7	5	3	2	4	1	9	8

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13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Arroz con Pollo

INGREDIENTS:
3 lbs (1.5 kg) chicken breasts, thighs and drumsticks
Nonstick cooking spray
1 tbsp (15 ml) vegetable oil
1 cup (250 ml) uncooked long-grain white rice
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1 can (14 oz/392 g) low-sodium tomatoes, undrained and cut up
1 large green pepper, chopped
1/2 cup (125 ml) chopped cooked lower-sodium ham
3/4 tsp (4 ml) hot red pepper sauce
1/4 tsp (1 ml) salt
1/4 cup (50 ml) sliced black olives

METHOD:
1. Remove and discard chicken skin. Rinse chicken; drain and pat dry. Coat Dutch oven with cooking spray. Add oil and heat over moderately high heat. Brown chicken in hot oil 10 minutes or until golden, turning occasionally. Remove chicken from Dutch oven. Add rice and garlic to Dutch oven. Cook and stir over moderate heat for 5 minutes or until rice just starts to brown.
2. Stir chicken broth, tomatoes, green pepper, ham, pepper sauce and salt into Dutch oven. Return chicken to Dutch oven. Bring to boil. Lower heat and simmer, covered, about 30 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and rice is tender. Stir in olives; heat through.

SERVES 6

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
A bully will force a cancellation. You'll forget all about a bad moment. Something wonderful will happen before you know it.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
A message appears from nowhere. Give someone another chance to make you happy. Forgive yourself for having second thoughts.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Someone's words will replay in your mind. Relatives will have temper tantrums. Make a difference by giving an understandable message.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A misunderstanding can cause a break-up. Hearsay should be ignored in an unfair situation. A disturbing puzzle keeps you on your feet.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A girl is secretly hoarding stuff. Be cautious about giving advice to anyone. Remember to keep smiling, no matter what happens.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
An adventure will cause distress. Focus on what you can do to find happiness. Go out of your way to avoid cranky people.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Look for a pattern within the pandemonium. A weak-willed boy will go home. You'll hear a sad tale about cheating.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A glitch causes irritability to flare up. A friend's information will be of importance. Your self-esteem is about to be increase.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Be tough as nails with boring people. A friend will explain about a break-up. Jumping to conclusions throws you off-balance.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Give someone a reason to avoid a difficult situation. A friend is sad about a revelation. A man lets go of a careless style.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Take the easy way out for a while. Make comments to help change a woman's mind. Get satisfaction from a new friendship.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
An irresistible woman will go too far. Don't be your own worst enemy. Opportunities will crop up between friends.

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MARVELOUS MARKETS

Choose London for your vacation this year and have a really unique experience visiting one-of-a-kind attractions that you simply won't find at home. Many of London's markets sell unique gifts set against unforgettable historic backdrops or indeed cutting edge culture.

With a much more favorable exchange rate*, a trip to London will cost 25% less than this time last year, so make sure you take the opportunity to explore some of the city's famous markets.

Meet the locals

London has over 80 major and local markets to explore and they each have their own atmosphere and character. Arts and crafts markets are full of color and a great place to find unique, one-off pieces.

*$1.5 : £1 at time of press

Insider tip: For ideas about where to go near the market, ask the stall holders, they'll be more than happy to recommend their favorite places.

Bag a bargain

If you're looking for the perfect gift for friends and family, you'll find some great deals at London's markets. Spitalfields Market in East London has a range of fashion and accessories, and it's also worth checking out the quirky shops in the surrounding area.

Find the real flavor of London at Portobello Market in West London. The market is famous for its small cobbled streets, antiques and cool, vintage fashions.

Insider tip: While you're in East London, head down to Brick Lane for a touch of spice at one of the areas famous South East Asian curry houses.

Best of Britain

London is a truly international city, yet also offers plenty of variety of food and culture from the rest of Britain. You'll be able to find products and goods sourced across the country such as great cheese from Yorkshire and delicious sausages from Scotland!

Sample fresh British food at one of London's 13 farmer's markets, which sell fresh, seasonal produce from farms close to London. The largest market is held in Marylebone every Sunday between 10am and 2pm.

Insider tip: Change your dollars commission free at Thomas Cook foreign exchange branches in London. All you need is a voucher that is downloadable at **visitlondon.com**. You'll also receive a discount booklet worth £100 to help save on various London attractions.

Welcome to my World

Sian Murphy,
First Artist,
The Royal Ballet

I'm a First Artist with The Royal Ballet, which is based in the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, home to some of the world's most talented artists who make every opera and ballet performance special.

I recommend the backstage tours of the Royal Opera House. It's a wonderful experience. If you're lucky, you might even get to see the dancers in rehearsal.

We're located right in the heart of Covent Garden, which is a great spot for visitors. Where else in the world can you visit an Opera House, fine restaurants, quaint market and have a free tour de force performance by a street artist within such close proximity?

My favorite thing about the city is that it is friendly, traditional, yet fully embraces the 21st Century. It will make you glad you came and make you want to come back again and again.

For full details on London's markets and more tips on how to make the most of your vacation in London, log on to visitlondon.com

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